A STORY OF
BRITISH COLONIZATION

THE ISLANDS AND
THE SEAS

30/- York.

L.W. Keohane

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

PHILIPS' NEW STUDENTS' HISTORICAL ATLAS
(The work to which reference is made throughout the following pages.)

PHILIPS' SCHOOL ATLAS OF MODERN HISTORY

THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA

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A HISTORY OF LIVERPOOL

PEERS AND BUREAUCRATS: Two Problems of English Government

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

IN TWO VOLUMES

BY

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VOLUME I

THE ISLANDS AND THE FIRST EMPIRE

(TO 1763)

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PREFACE

THE book of which this volume is the first half is an attempt to tell, within moderate compass, the story of the British Commonwealth, regarded as a single whole, but also as a part of the greater commonwealth of Western Civilisation. As I have conceived it, it is the story of a number of peoples gradually learning to live together in a free partnership, inspired by their common enjoyment of the institutions of political liberty.

It is part of the plan of the book that the treatment should become fuller as the narrative draws nearer to our own time. The present volume extends to 1763, and covers all that part of the story which is common to all the English-speaking peoples. It will be succeeded by a second volume of similar dimensions, which will bring the story down to the Great War.

In this first volume the bulk of the space is necessarily devoted to the history of England, because it was in England that the institutions and ideas characteristic of the whole Commonwealth had their birth and early development. But I have tried in several respects to differentiate my narrative from the many admirable summaries of English history with which it may seem to challenge comparison.

(1) I have endeavoured to give a clear and distinctive treatment to the history of Wales, Scotland and Ireland, so far as the limits of space permitted ; while, in the second half of the volume, I have laid an increasing degree of emphasis upon the history of the Colonies, the development of oversea trade, and the part played by the Navy in determining the fortunes of the Commonwealth as a whole.

(2) I have striven to keep the reader's mind awake to the most significant features of contemporary European history, especially during the modern age ; and to show the influence of European events upon the development of

the Commonwealth. In particular I have tried to make clear, at each stage, the part played by other European countries in the extension of European civilisation to the non-European world, and the contrasts between the methods of the rivals in this field.

(3) Even in the narrative of English history my aim has been to emphasise those aspects only which seemed to be of direct importance for the future development of the whole Commonwealth. I have therefore dealt comparatively lightly with the mediæval period down to 1485; it occupies only one-fourth of the present volume. In the mediæval section, and indeed throughout the volume, I have laid stress especially upon the growth of institutions, and upon the gradual change in the social organisation of the British peoples. This does not mean that I have thrust wars into the background. While I have deliberately dealt very summarily with minor wars, I have treated pretty fully the great struggles which have marked the principal epochs in the development of the British Commonwealth—the Elizabethan war against Spain, the Civil War, the wars against Louis XIV., and, above all, the culminating conflict with France in the middle of the eighteenth century. J. R. Green, that admirable writer, never wrote a more foolish sentence than one which occurs in the preface to his most famous book: 'War plays a small part in the real story of European nations, and in that of England its part is smaller than in any.' Green wrote in a time of long-established peace. We, who have lived through the most terrible of all wars, know that there are some wars which not only vitally influence the external fortunes of States, but profoundly affect their character, their institutions, and their social order; and the four great wars which I have named assuredly fall into this category.

The plan of the book, and the complexity of its subject matter, have compelled me to disregard entirely the conventional division into dynasties and reigns, and to take a considerable latitude in departing from chronological order. As a means of remedying the defects of this method, of bringing out instructive synchronisms, and at the same time of making cross-reference easier, a 'Chronological

Index' is added to the volume. For the gift of this index (which deliberately abstains from any attempt to be exhaustive) I am deeply indebted to Miss Harriet Davies. An index of the ordinary type will be included in the second volume.

No maps are inserted in the narrative: I have contented myself with frequent footnote references to my *Students' Atlas of Modern History*, to which this book is meant to be a companion. I have also used footnotes to direct the attention of the reader to a large number of good, short biographies, and to a few novels. Short lists of good modern books in English are appended to each chapter.

I hope that the book may be useful to teachers, and that, in spite of its length, it may be suitable for the higher forms in schools, for training colleges, and for the junior classes in Universities. But while I have kept these needs in view, my primary aim has been to make the noble and stirring story of the development of the British Commonwealth at once intelligible and interesting to the general reader.

In conclusion I have to give my cordial thanks to my friends Miss B. A. Lees, Professor Powicke, Dr. G. S. Veitch, and Mr. C. S. S. Higham, who have kindly read parts of the volume in proof, and given me the advantage of their criticism.

RAMSAY MUIR.

BUXTON, *May* 1920.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

BOOK I

THE MAKING OF THE FOUR NATIONS (TO A.D. 1215)

CHAP. PAGE

INTRODUCTION, ... 3

I. THE FIRST INHABITANTS AND THE FIRST CONTACT WITH CIVILISATION, ... 5

§ 1. The Islands and their Earliest Peoples, p. 5; § 2. The Roman Occupation, p. 9.

II. THE TEUTONIC INVADERS (A.D. 410-825), . . 13

§ 1. The Barbarian Conquerors and the Chaos they produced, p. 13; § 2. The Revival of Civilisation, p. 19; § 3. England in 800 A.D., p. 23.

III. THE INVASIONS OF THE NORTHMEN (A.D. 825-1066), . 26

§ 1. The Vikings and their Ravages, p. 26; § 2. Alfred the Great and the Emperor Kings, p. 29; § 3. The Second Danish Conquest and the Coming of the Normans, p. 34; § 4. The Need for the Norman Conquest, p. 37.

IV. THE WORK OF THE NORMAN KINGS (A.D. 1066-1154), . 41

§ 1. The Norman Conquest and the Establishment of the Feudal Order, p. 41; § 2. The Beginnings of a National System of Government, p. 43; § 3. Norman Influence in Wales and Scotland, p. 49.

V. THE REIGN OF LAW ESTABLISHED (A.D. 1154-1216), . 51

§ 1. The Angevin Empire and Europe in the Twelfth Century, p. 51; § 2. Henry II.'s Work of Organisation, p. 57; § 3. Richard I. and John: the Winning of Magna Carta, p. 61.

VI. THE STATE OF ENGLAND IN 1215, . . . 67

§ 1. A Land of Communities, p. 67; § 2. The Church and its Services to Civilisation, p. 72; § 3. Contact with Europe, p. 75; § 4. The Backwardness of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, p. 76.

BOOK II

THE CONFLICTS OF THE FOUR NATIONS: AND THE GROWTH OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND (A.D. 1215–1485)

CHAP. PAGE

INTRODUCTION, ... 81

I. THE MEDIÆVAL WORLD AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE ISLANDS, ... 83

§ 1. Changes in the Political Systems and Ideas of Europe, p. 83; § 2. The Enrichment of Civilisation: the Friars and the Universities, p. 89.

II. THE ORGANISATION OF THE ENGLISH NATION (A.D. 1216-1307), ... 95

§ 1. The Rise of National Feeling, p. 95; § 2. Montfort and the First Attempt at Parliamentary Government, p. 97; § 3. Edward I. and the Establishment of Parliament, p. 101; § 4. The Lawyer-King as National Leader, p. 103.

III. THE CONQUEST OF WALES, ... 107

IV. THE INDEPENDENCE OF SCOTLAND, . . . 113

§ 1. The Development of the Scottish Monarchy, p. 113; § 2. Edward I.'s Attempt to subjugate Scotland, p. 115; § 3. The Scottish Resistance under Wallace and Bruce, p. 116; § 4. Bannockburn and the Establishment of Independence, p. 118.

V. THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO CONQUER FRANCE, . . 122

§ 1. The Motives of the Attempt, p. 122; § 2. The War and its Consequences, p. 125.

VI. CHANGING SOCIAL CONDITIONS, ... 130

§ 1. Changes in the Character of the Feudal Baronage, p. 130; § 2. Peasants and their Landlords: the Black Death, p. 133; § 3. The Growth of Trade and Industry, and their Organisation, p. 136; § 4. Intellectual Ferment: Wycliffe and the Church, p. 140

VII. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH SELF-GOVERNMENT (A.D. 1307-1422), ... 144

§ 1. Edward II. and Thomas of Lancaster, p. 145; § 2. The Wars of Edward III. and the Growth of Parliamentary Power, p. 147; § 3. The Invention of Impeachment: the Justices of the Peace, p. 150; § 4. Parliamentary Supremacy and the Revolt of the Peasants, p. 153; § 5. Reaction and Revolution, p. 156; § 6. The Lancastrian Experiment of Limited Monarchy, p. 161.

CHAP. PAGE

VIII. THE SECOND ATTEMPT TO CONQUER FRANCE (A.D. 1411-1453), ... 165

§ 1. The French Factions, and the Victories of Henry V., p. 165; § 2. Joan of Arc, and the Ruin of English Ambitions in France, p. 169.

IX. THE STRIFE OF FACTIONS IN ENGLAND (A.D. 1422-1485), 173

§ 1. Faction and Disorder in England, p. 173; § 2. The Wars of the Roses, p. 178; § 3. The House of York and the Re-establishment of Royal Power, p. 180.

X. WALES, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES, ... 184

§ 1. Wales, p. 184; § 2. Scotland, p. 185; § 3. Ireland, p. 188.

XI. EUROPE AND THE ISLANDS ON THE EVE OF THE MODERN AGE, ... 192

§ 1. The Cosmopolitan Ideal of the Middle Ages and its Breakdown, p. 192; § 2. The Political Condition of Europe: the Rise of Nation-States, p. 195; § 3. The Turkish Peril, p. 200; § 4. The Political Contrast between England and Europe, p. 201.

BOOK III

THE BEGINNING OF THE MODERN AGE: THE REFORMATION, AND THE OPENING OF THE SEAS (A.D. 1485–1603)

INTRODUCTION, ... 207

I. THE RESTORATION OF GOOD GOVERNMENT (A.D. 1485-1529), ... 210

§ 1. The Privy Council and the Re-establishment of Order, p. 210; § 2. The Splendour of Henry VIII. and Wolsey, p. 214; § 3. Growing National Strength, p. 216; § 4. England and her Sister Realms, p. 218.

II. THE RENASCENCE, ... 222

§ 1. The Meaning of the Renascence, p. 222; § 2. The Renascence in England, p. 225; § 3. Moral and Political Aspects of the Renascence, p. 228.

III. THE NEW ERA IN FOREIGN POLITICS (A.D. 1485-1529), . 230

§ 1. The Beginning of National Rivalries: the Wars of Italy, p. 230; § 2. Charles V., Francis I., and Solyman the Turk, p. 232; § 3. The Balance of Power, p. 235.

CHAP. PAGE

IV. THE UNVEILING OF THE OUTER WORLD, . . . 237

§ 1. The First Great Discoveries, p. 237; § 2. The Portuguese Power in the East, p. 240; § 3. The Spanish Empire in America, p. 241; § 4. The Modest Enterprises of France and England, p. 244.

V. THE REFORMATION IN EUROPE AND IN ENGLAND (A.D. 1517-1559), ... 246

§ 1. The Reformation in Europe, p. 246; § 2. The King's Divorce and the Breach with Rome, p. 251; § 3. The Dissolution of the Monasteries, and the Organisation of Despotism, p. 256; § 4. The Culmination of Henry VIII.'s Power, p. 260; § 5. Edward VI. and Protestantism Triumphant, p. 262; § 6. Mary and the Catholic Reaction, p. 267; § 7. The Elizabethan Settlement, p. 271.

VI. THE REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND (A.D. 1528-1561), . 274

§ 1. Scotland in the Sixteenth Century, p. 274; § 2. Scotland, England and France, p. 277; § 3. John Knox and the Religious Revolution, p. 279; § 4. The Years of Crisis, and the Anglo-Scottish Alliance, p. 281; § 5. The Religious Settlement in Scotland, p. 284.

VII. ELIZABETH, MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS, AND PHILIP II. (A.D. 1561-1587), ... 287

§ 1. The Counter-Reformation and the Political Situation in Europe in 1559, p. 287; § 2. Elizabeth and Mary, 1561-1571, p. 291; § 3. Years of Intensifying Strain, 1571-1584, p. 295; § 4. The Open Conflict with Spain, and the Execution of Mary, p. 300.

VIII. THE ENGLISH SEAMEN, AND THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA, ... 303

§ 1. The Search for New Trade Outlets, p. 303; § 2. The Pirates of the Narrow Seas, p. 305; § 3. Drake and the Adventures of the Spanish Main, p. 308; § 4. The Spanish Armada, p. 314.

IX. THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND, ... 321

§ 1. The Problem of Ireland, p. 321; § 2. The First Attempts to solve the Irish Problem, p. 324; § 3. Religious Conflict and the Munster Risings, p. 327; § 4. The Irish National Rising under Tyrone, p. 331.

X. THE AGE OF ELIZABETH (A.D. 1558-1603), . . 335

§ 1. Literary Activities, p. 335; § 2. Social Conditions, p. 338; § 3. Economic Changes, p. 342; § 4. The Religious Changes, p. 346; § 5. The Queen and her Parliament, p. 350.

BOOK IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL SELF-GOVERNMENT; AND THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH EXPANSION OVERSEA (A.D. 1603–1660)

CHAP. PAGE

INTRODUCTION, ... 357

I. EUROPE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, ... 359

§ 1. Problems of Peace and War, p. 359; § 2. The Thirty Years' War, p. 364.

II. THE FIRST COLONIES, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF TRADE WITH INDIA, ... 370

§ 1. International Rivalry in Oversea Trade, p. 370; § 2. European Enterprises in the East: the East India Company, p. 372; § 3. Colonising Activities in the West: Canada, Virginia, and New England, p. 376.

III. THE CONFLICT OF CROWN AND PARLIAMENT (A.D. 1603-1629), ... 385

§ 1. The General Grounds of Conflict, p. 385; § 2. James I. and his Parliaments, p. 391; § 3. Charles I. and the Petition of Right, p. 394.

IV. IRELAND AND SCOTLAND UNDER THE EARLY STEWARTS (A.D. 1603-1640), ... 401

§ 1. Ireland: the Plantation of Ulster, p. 401; § 2. The Irish Policy of Wentworth, p. 404; § 3. Scotland: the Absolutism of James I., p. 406; § 4. The Revolt of the Scots against the Policy of Charles I., p. 409.

V. PERSONAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS DOWNFALL (A.D. 1629-1642), ... 414

§ 1. The Years of Personal Government, p. 414; § 2. The Aims and Methods of Laud, p. 419; § 3. The Puritan Emigration, 421; § 4. Ship Money and its Significance, p. 428; § 5. The Collapse of Personal Government and the Definition of Limited Monarchy, p. 430; § 6. The Cleavage of Parties and the Drift towards Civil War, p. 434.

CHAP. PAGE

VI. CIVIL WAR IN THE ISLANDS (A.D. 1642-1649), . . 440

§ 1. The Situation at the Outbreak of War, p. 440; § 2. The First Three Campaigns, p. 443; § 3. The Professional Army, and the Downfall of the Royalist Cause, p. 447; § 4. Attempts to find a Settlement, p. 451; § 5. Solution by the Sword, p. 454.

VII. THE PURITAN REPUBLIC AND THE PROTECTORATE (A.D. 1649-1658), ... 458

§ 1. The Situation in 1649, p. 458; § 2. The Security of the Republic Established, p. 461; § 3. The Attempt to find a New System of Government, p. 465; § 4. The Achievements of the Republic and the Protectorate, p. 471.

VIII. THE PURITAN REPUBLIC AND THE OUTER WORLD, . 475

§ 1. Naval and Colonial Policy; the Dutch War, 475; § 2. Cromwell's Foreign Policy and the War with Spain, p. 480.

IX. THE COLLAPSE OF THE PURITAN REPUBLIC (A.D. 1658-1660), ... 484

BOOK V

CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT AND IMPERIAL DEVELOPMENT (A.D. 1660–1714)

INTRODUCTION, ... 491

I. THE RESTORATION, ... 494

§ 1. The Ideas of the Restoration and the Character of Charles II., p. 494; § 2. England: Limited Monarchy and Religious Intolerance, p. 496; § 3. Scotland: Absolutism and Religious Persecution, p. 501; § 4. Ireland: Absolutism and partial Reconciliation, p. 504.

II. EUROPE IN THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV. (A.D. 1661-1688), . 508

§ 1. The Age of Enlightenment, p. 508; § 2. The Ascendency of France, p. 511; § 3. The Wars of Louis XIV. (to 1688), p. 514; § 4. Northern Europe: the Rise of the Hohenzollerns, p. 519; § 5. The Problem of the Turkish Empire, p. 521; § 6. The Prevalence of Absolute Monarchy in Europe, p. 523.

III. RIVAL COLONIAL EMPIRES, ... 525

§ 1. International Rivalry Overseas, p. 525; § 2. The French Colonial Empire and the Development of Canada, p. 526; § 3. A New Era in British Colonial Policy, p. 530; § 4. The Establishment of New Colonies, p. 534; § 5. A Period of Friction, p. 539.

CHAP. PAGE

IV. THE RISE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ENGLAND (A D. 1660-1688), ... 542

§ 1. The First Rudiments of a Cabinet and of Political Parties: Clarendon, 1660-7, p. 542; § 2. The Cabal: Religious Toleration, Secret Dealings with France and Parliamentary Opposition, 1667-73, p. 544; § 3. Danby and the Organisation of Political Parties, 1673-78, p. 547; § 4. Violent Party Conflict, 1679-81, p. 550; § 5. Triumphant Reaction and the Disregard of Laws, 1681-88, p. 554.

V. THE REVOLUTION (A.D. 1688-1692), . . . 560

§ 1. The European Situation and the Downfall of James II., p. 560; § 2. The War of the Revolution, in Scotland, in Ireland, and on the Seas, p. 564.

VI. THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT (A.D. 1689-1707), . 570

§ 1. The General Character of the Settlement, p. 570; § 2. Tories and Whigs: rival Conceptions of Government, p. 571; § 3. The Constitutional Settlement in England, p. 575; § 4. The Relations between Government and Parliament, p. 578; § 5. The Revolution Settlement in Scotland and its Effects upon Anglo-Scottish Relations, p. 580; § 6. The Union of England and Scotland, p. 583; § 7. The Revolution Settlement in Ireland, and the Penal Code, p. 586; § 8. The Revolution in the Colonies, p. 591.

VII. THE DOWNFALL OF LOUIS XIV. (A.D. 1689-1713), . 597

§ 1. The War of the League of Augsburg, and the British share in it, p. 597; § 2. The Problem of the Spanish Inheritance, p. 600; § 3. The Military Problem, and the Greatness of Marlborough, p. 606; § 4. The War of the Spanish Succession, p. 609; § 5. The Peace of Utrecht, p. 614.

VIII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS (A.D. 1660-1714), . . 618

§ 1. The Causes of the Growing Wealth of Britain: Foreign Trade and Banking, p. 618; § 2. The Influence of the 'Moneyed Interest' and its Effects upon National Policy, p. 624.

IX. PARTY CONFLICTS IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE (A.D. 1702-1714), ... 630

§ 1. The Whigs and the Tories, p. 630; § 2. The War Government of Marlborough and the Ascendency of the Whigs, p. 633; § 3. Bolingbroke and the New Toryism, p. 636.

BOOK VI

THE WHIG OLIGARCHY; AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY (1714–1763)

CHAP. PAGE

INTRODUCTION, ... 645

I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHIG OLIGARCHY: THE JACOBITE RISINGS, ... 648

§ 1. The Insecurity of the New Régime and the Jacobite Rising of 1715, p. 648; § 2. The Organisation of the Whig Oligarchy, p. 653; § 3. The House of Commons under the Whigs, p. 656; § 4. The Young Chevalier, and the Last Great Effort of the Jacobites, p. 659.

II. BALANCE OF POWER (A.D. 1714-1739), . . . 664

§ 1. Characteristics of the Period, p. 664; § 2. The Decay of Turkey, Poland and Sweden, and the Rise of Russia, p. 665; § 3. The Franco-British Alliance for the Maintenance of Peace, p. 669; § 4. The Gradual Rupture of the Franco-British Alliance, and the Question of Poland, p. 673.

III. TRADE AND COLONIAL RIVALRY (A.D. 1714-1739), . 677

§ 1. Exaggerated Expectations from Tropical Trade, p. 677; § 2. The Chief Spheres of Tropical Trade: the Slave-Trade and the Great Triangle, p. 679; § 3. North American Trade, and Franco-British Rivalry, p. 683.

IV. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WHIGS (A.D. 1714-1739), . 687

§ 1. The Whig Ministries, p. 687; § 2. Walpole, the Great Whig; the Principles of his Policy, p. 689; § 3. Walpole's Constructive Work, p. 693; § 4. The Opposition to the Whigs: the Ideas of Bolingbroke, p. 697.

V. THE WESLEYS AND THE REVIVAL OF ENTHUSIASM, . 701

§ 1. The Age of Reason, p. 701; § 2. The Beginnings of Organised Philanthropy: the Colony of Georgia, p. 704; § 3. The Religious Revival in Wales, and the Methodist Movement, p. 706.

CHAP. PAGE

VI. THE FIRST PHASES OF THE GREAT CONFLICT FOR MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY (A.D. 1739-1755), 710

§ 1. The Opening of the Conflict, p. 710; § 2. The Maritime War with Spain, p. 711; § 3. The War of the Austrian Succession, and the Potency of Sea-Power, p. 712; § 4. The Beginning of Franco-British Conflict Overseas, p. 717; § 5. The Years of Nominal Peace, 1748-55, p. 719; § 6. The Diplomatic Revolution of 1756, p. 724; § 7. British Politics and the Great Conflict: the Emergence of Pitt, p. 728.

VII. WILLIAM PITT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY (A.D. 1755-1763), ... 733

§ 1. The Dark Days, p. 733; § 2. Pitt's Opportunity, and his Preparations, p. 736; § 3. The Turn of the Tide, 1758, p. 742; § 4. The *Annus Mirabilis* of 1759: Quebec and Quiberon, p. 746; § 5. Negotiations for Peace: the Fall of Pitt, p. 752; § 6. The Aftermath: the Downfall of Spain, p. 755; § 7. The Peace of Paris, p. 756.

VIII. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA, . 759

§ 1. The Main Factors of Indian Politics, p. 759; § 2. The Chaos of Eighteenth-Century India: the Mahrattas and the Afghans, p. 763; § 3. French and British in the Carnatic: the Projects of Dupleix, p. 767; § 4. Renewed Conflict; and the Establishment of British Influence in Bengal, p. 773; § 5. The Nature of the British Power in India in 1760, p. 778.

IX. THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, 782

§ 1. The Prosperity and Freedom of England, p. 782; § 2. English Rural Society and its Organisation, p. 784; § 3. The Ruling Classes: the Squirearchy and the Magnates: an Aristocratic Society, p. 787; § 4. The Commercial and Industrial Interests: the Growth of Capitalist Control, p. 793; § 5. The Growth of Prosperity in Scotland, p. 798; § 6. The Stagnancy of Ireland, p. 802; § 7. The British Lands oversea: their Social Character, p. 804; § 8. Problems of the Commonwealth, p. 812.

CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX, ... 815

BOOK I

THE MAKING OF THE FOUR NATIONS

(TO A.D. 1215)

INTRODUCTION

We are citizens not merely of a great country, but of a wonderful partnership or fellowship of peoples, which is generally known as the British Empire, but is better described as the British Commonwealth of Nations. It includes one-quarter of the area and one-quarter of the population of the world, and its territories are to be found in every continent and are washed by every ocean. There has never been, in all the history of mankind, a political structure which at all resembled the British Commonwealth. For its most striking feature is that it is not a mere Empire, held together solely by the military power of a conquering people, like the many Empires that have arisen and decayed in the course of history; but that each of its members retains its own distinct character, and is either entirely free in the management of its own affairs, or (if it is not ready for that) is governed with a view to the interests of its own people, and not with a view solely to the interests of the ruling race. All the innumerable nations and tribes included within the British Commonwealth are able to live together in peace, and to help and strengthen one another, while each of them retains its own customs and modes of life. That is something far more wonderful than the building of even the greatest empire by mere force. As we all are, or shall be, citizens of this world-wide Commonwealth of Nations, and must share the responsibility for maintaining and improving the traditions by which it has grown great, it is our duty to understand its character, and for that purpose to study its history. The purpose of this book is to explain how these traditions came into existence, and how the Commonwealth of Nations grew to its present marvellous dimensions.

It has all grown from the two small islands, Great Britain and Ireland, which lie off the north-west coast of Europe. They have shared in the common civilisation of Europe, but because they were islands they have been able to develop in security their own characteristic institutions.

And it has been these institutions, the institutions of political freedom, which have mainly determined the character and course of the history of the whole Commonwealth. Moreover in these two islands there are, and there have been for many centuries, no less than four distinct nations. They have learned slowly and, in the case of Ireland, very imperfectly, the difficult lesson of living together in peace as members of a single great State, without sacrificing their individual character. It has come to be one of the distinctive notes of the British Commonwealth that its ideal (not always realised) is to cultivate unity without sacrificing freedom or forcibly wiping out differences. And it was because the peoples of the islands had in some degree learnt to tolerate differences and to live together in mutual respect, that those who went forth from them into the new world and the old were able gradually to develop the world-wide partnership of free nations which is the British Commonwealth.

Hence our story must begin with the peoples of the islands; and its first stage must deal (though only in the broadest outline) with the development of the four nations out of the very mixed races who have made their homes in the islands.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST INHABITANTS AND THE FIRST CONTACT WITH CIVILISATION

§ 1. *The Islands and their Earliest Peoples.*

LONG before the dawn of history the British Islands were attached to the mainland of Europe; and the Thames and the Trent were tributaries of the Rhine. The first great event in the history of the British Commonwealth was the gradual physical change—due, the geologists tell us, to the melting of the huge polar ice-cap that once extended over all Northern Europe—which caused the seas to rise and to submerge the low plains where the English Channel and the North Sea now lie. For this change determined that the British lands, while forming a part of Europe, should stand a little aloof from it; and that their peoples, which were to be the mother-races of the Commonwealth, should be bred apart, not cut off from the influence of European civilisation, but yet free from constant contact and strife with their neighbours, and able, therefore, to develop their own institutions and modes of life in their own way.

Cut off thus from the Continent, and lying on its north-western margin with nothing beyond but the stormy expanse of ocean, the islands appeared to the ancients to be on the very edge of the round flat world. Ancient maps [1] show them thus, bordered by the great river Oceanus, which was supposed to encircle the earth, and beyond which, men thought, lay only emptiness. And so long as the Mediterranean Sea continued to be the centre of Western civilisation, as it did until four hundred years ago, the British Islands did indeed lie on the outskirts of the world, far from the heart of things, and counted for very little in the life of Europe. It was not until the great explorations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the islands

[1] See the maps reproduced in Atlas, Plate 46.

ceased to be among the most remote outlying regions of the civilised world, and found that they lay in the main track of the world's concerns. Then the great age of their history began, for which all the earlier ages were but a long preparation.

The fact that the islands lay on the outermost verge of the Eurasian continent had another vitally important influence upon their history. The shallow sundering seas were narrow and easily crossed; and so it came about that, in the incessant movement of peoples from the east westwards, branches of all the races which came into Western Europe also passed over the Narrow Seas, and made their contribution to the population of the islands. And because there were no further lands into which the earlier migrants could be driven by their successors, all these peoples were forced to blend with one another; with the result that the peoples of the islands derive their origin from a greater variety of racial stocks than perhaps any other people in Europe. As each of the migrant peoples pressed into the islands it conquered its predecessors, drove some of them into the less fertile regions of the north and west, enslaved the rest, and then gradually blended with them by intermarriage.

The earlier of these hordes of primitive conquerors have left behind them no written records; so that we cannot even distinguish accurately between them, or tell with any precision when they entered the islands, or describe their life and character in any but the most general way. But they have left their traces in the soil:—entrenched camps on the hillsides; tombs of various shapes; fragments of implements and weapons left in caves or in the alluvial deposits by river-sides; above all, skulls or skeletons; and from these relics scholars piece together some ideas about our remote ancestors.

The earliest of these relics belong to what is called the Old Stone Age; but it is probable that the men of this age died out altogether, and did not contribute at all to the making of the mixed British peoples.

The first race that we can confidently regard as our part-ancestors were the men of the New Stone Age. There may have been more than one race in this age; but one of them was a short, dark people with long-shaped skulls, whom scholars call the Mediterranean race, because peoples of their type form the basis of the population in all the Mediterranean lands. They were followed by a taller race,

with round-shaped skulls, who had learnt to use bronze implements, and probably owed their superiority to this cause. They were evidently a fairly civilised people, for they grew corn, knew how to weave cloth, and could make pottery. It was probably these people who erected the numerous circles of standing stones, of which Stonehenge is the most remarkable; and as the monoliths of which these great circles are composed were in some cases brought from a distance, the builders must have had a considerable degree of engineering skill. They conquered and blended with their predecessors, and the mixed race spread all over the islands. We are all in some degree descended from them; but as many of them were driven westwards and northwards by later conquerors, they became most numerous in these parts of the islands, and the short, dark types of Irishmen, Welshmen and Scottish Highlanders are their most typical representatives.

The next race won their victory because they had learnt to use iron. These were the Celts, a big-boned, fair-haired people, who formed the first wave of the great Aryan stock, from which all the principal peoples of Europe, as well as the ruling elements in India and Persia, are mainly descended, and to which all the later conquerors of Britain belonged. Five or six hundred years before Christ the Celtic peoples occupied the greater part of Europe north of the Alps; they pressed down into Italy and threatened the rising city of Rome; and one branch of them established themselves in Asia Minor, and became the ancestors of St. Paul's Galatians. But in course of time the next Aryan wave, that of the Teutons, pressed them westward beyond the Rhine, so that among the continental countries it is only in France, Belgium, Northern Italy and Spain that their blood forms a very important element. Their languages survive only in the islands and in Brittany; and the tender vein of poetry and of love for natural beauty which they developed is a heritage of great value which the peoples of the islands owe to them.

The Celts came to Britain in two, or perhaps three, distinct waves, separated by a considerable interval of time. First came the Gaels, whose form of the Celtic language is still spoken in Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland; perhaps a couple of centuries later they were followed by a second wave, the Britons, whose language is still spoken in Wales and Brittany, and was, not long ago, spoken in Cornwall. The Gaels conquered and enslaved the earlier

inhabitants, or drove them to the north and west; the Britons, in their turn, treated the Gaels in the same way. Both alike so completely overcame their subjects that the languages of the earlier inhabitants disappeared altogether, and the mixed race learnt to regard itself as Celtic; but this, of course, does not in the least imply that the earlier peoples were destroyed. Primitive peoples often change their languages easily. In the fourth century before Christ, when Alexander the Great was conquering Western Asia, all Britain south of the Forth was British; the rest of Britain and the whole of Ireland were Gaelic; but in both regions the race was already a very mixed one.

We know nothing at all about the actual events of these conquests: indeed, we know practically nothing about the history of the inhabitants of Britain down to the eve of the Christian era. During all these centuries the real centre of Western civilisation was in the lands bordering on the Mediterranean, where the Jewish prophets were preaching the doctrines of an exalted religion; where the Phœnician navigators were extending the range of commerce, and pushing their daring explorations through the Pillars of Hercules to the Atlantic shores of Europe and round the circumference of Africa; where the little Greek city-states were laying the foundation of political liberty, and creating western art, philosophy and literature; and where the Romans were proving the power of Law and Discipline, and were gradually bringing under their firm and organised rule all the Mediterranean peoples.

Britain was scarcely at all influenced by all this wonderful activity, which was creating what we call Western civilisation. At first, and for long, the contact of the island tribes with this nascent civilisation was very slight and purely external. Phœnician sailors at an early date came to the Scilly Islands to buy tin. Greek merchants from Marseilles carried on a certain amount of overland traffic through the tribes of Gaul, who had relations with their British cousins. The more settled tribes in Southern Britain carried on some rude trade, were introduced to Greek coins, and tried to make a coinage of their own after the same pattern. A bold Greek explorer, Pytheas, about the time of Alexander the Great, made his way through the straits of Gibraltar and as far north as the Shetlands; and he wrote an account of his travels, much as our Elizabethan explorers described their adventures among the strange seas and the wild savages of the new world. But on the whole the islands

were almost as much out of touch with the main stream of history as the tribes of America were before the great discoveries.

In the earlier part of the Celtic period, we shall probably not be far wrong if we think of the Gaels and Britons as being in much the same stage of civilisation as the Red Indians of the seventeenth century. They were organised in clans, under the lead of hereditary chieftains. They were great fighting men, and constantly at war with one another. Their warriors, like the Red Indians, loved to paint or tattoo their bodies; 'Briton' probably means 'painted,' and the wilder northern clans, among whom this custom lasted longest, were known, centuries after Christ, as the 'Picts,' or painted men. They worshipped many gods, representing the forces of Nature, to whom they offered human sacrifices; and their priests, the remarkable order of Druids, exercised so great an ascendency among them that they may perhaps be compared to the Red Indians' Medicine Men. No doubt the civilisation of the southern part of the island had developed a good deal by the time that Cæsar landed in it, fifty-five years before Christ. But he found all these customs still in existence.

§ 2. *The Roman Occupation.*

It was a great thing for the Britons when the advancing tide of Roman conquest brought them into contact with a highly developed civilisation. The greatest of Roman statesmen and generals, Julius Cæsar, having conquered the whole of Gaul, was led to pay two visits to the south-east corner of Great Britain, in 55 and 54 B.C. Unfortunately he was unable to undertake the conquest of the island, being called away by more important affairs in Italy, where a few years later he set up his personal authority over the whole Roman Empire. It was not until a century later that the Roman Government undertook the conquest of Great Britain. Between A.D. 43 and 61 the island was conquered and organised as far north as the Humber. A few years later the great general, Agricola, set forth to complete the conquest of the island, and fought, far north among the Scottish mountains, the battle of Mons Graupius (A.D. 84). But the vigour of Rome was already declining; these barren deserts did not seem worth conquering, and the task was never completed. For a brief period, indeed, the Lowlands of Scotland were occupied; roads and camps were made between the Tyne and the Forth, and a rampart

was erected from the Forth to the Clyde, to keep off the fierce hillmen. But even this part of Scotland was never seriously organised as a Roman province, and the Romans never directly touched Ireland at all, though they had trade relations with it. Except for a short period they practically limited themselves to the region south of the Tyne and Solway, which was fenced off by a wonderful massive wall of stone, with great towers at intervals, which is still to be seen, a series of splendid ruins, standing gauntly among the moorlands.

The area south of this wall—practically the whole of England and Wales—was pretty thoroughly organised as a Roman province,[1] and had its share in the common life of the civilised world for more than three centuries and a half. The Romans garrisoned the country with three legions of their famous soldiery. They built towns, the relics of which—long buried beneath the debris which was due to the neglect and hatred of the savages who followed—are still to be seen at Bath, Chester, Silchester, Wroxeter, and elsewhere. They introduced their own laws and languages, and the upper classes among the Britons most probably became Latin speakers, in much the same way as the upper classes in modern India have become English speakers. But they never effectually Romanised the mass of the people, who laboured as serfs on their estates, as they Romanised the people of Gaul and Spain. Most of the Britons still spoke their Celtic dialects, and the Romans had not long left the island before their language ceased to be used by any but the learned.

Christianity followed the Romans into Britain, at first as a persecuted, then as a recognised religion, and there were British bishops and British martyrs. But there were seemingly very few churches; and it appears probable that the mass of the country-folk remained pagan. Yet the new religion had got itself established, and it was capable of growing by its own strength. It had even begun, before the Romans left the island, to spread to the wilder Celtic peoples of Scotland and Ireland whom the Romans never conquered.

Apart from Christianity, then, the Roman occupation left comparatively little permanent mark upon the people: only the upper class of the Celts seem in any full degree to have adopted the culture of their masters. But there was one aspect of the Romans' work which proved a per-

[1] See the map of Roman Britain, Atlas, Plate 30.

manent contribution to the progress of Great Britain. They built a wonderful system of roads, straight and solidly paved, sweeping across the hills and valleys, and through the wide forests and marshes; and these roads, for the first time, made communication easy between one part of Great Britain and another. They turned it from a series of little isolated districts into a relatively unified country. For many centuries to come these great roads were to be one of the chief unifying forces in Great Britain. Down to the eighteenth century they continued to be the main means of communication in the divided land.[1]

During the first four centuries of the Christian era the Roman Empire[2] had given to the whole world of Western civilisation a period of peace and orderly rule, such as it had never known before, and has never known since. Under its protection the art and the wisdom of Greece had become the common heritage of the West; and along its guarded roads the missionaries of Christianity had come and gone, gradually increasing the number of their adherents, at first in obscurity, then in the face of persecution, and finally under the official sanction of the Emperors, until almost the whole Western world, except some of the *pagani* or country-folk, had become Christian. It was this period of peace and law, with the ideas it implanted as to men's duties to the State and to one another, which laid the solid foundations of European or Western civilisation; and no people has played any great part in the history of that civilisation until it has been enabled, directly or indirectly, to become a partner in the heritage of Rome. All this had been possible because the armies of the Empire guarded its long frontiers as the British armies to-day guard the frontiers of India, and were able to prevent the inrush of the barbarians who lay without.

The most formidable of these barbarians were the fierce Teutonic clans, who wandered and fought among the forests and marshes of Germany. Some of these tribes, dwelling on the borders of the Empire, had learned to venerate its splendid order and civilisation, and many of them had been converted to Christianity before the end of the fourth century; but their admiration was mingled with greed, and they longed to take these rich and cultivated lands for themselves. And, as time passed, the chance of their

[1] See the road map in the Introduction to the Atlas, p. 34, which shows how the Roman roads continued to be used.

[2] See the map of the Roman Empire, Atlas, Plate 1.

doing so seemed to become greater. The Roman Empire was slowly but surely decaying. It could no longer man its armies from among its own citizens, and began to take a dangerously large proportion of recruits from among the German tribes themselves. In the middle of the third century the barbarians were able to burst the guarded frontiers, and work vast damage in the peaceful provinces; and though they were thrust out again, and the Empire was reorganised, a whole rich province—modern Hungary and Rumania—had to be abandoned to the Goths.

At length, towards the end of the fourth century, the great catastrophe arrived. A new wave of invaders from the East, the ferocious and brutal Huns, were forcing their way into Europe. Their advance threw all the German tribes into confusion; and, escaping from the Huns, they burst their way across the Rhine and the Danube. In the course of the next generation these barbarian invaders made themselves masters of the richest provinces in the western half of the Empire.[1] The Visigoths were in Spain, the Ostrogoths in Italy, the Vandals in Northern Africa, the Burgundians in South-Eastern France, and the Franks in Northern France. Britain, too, had long been threatened. Sea-rovers from North-Western Germany, the pagan Saxons, who had never come in contact with Rome, and were among the fiercest and most backward of the Teutons, had long been harrying the east coast of Britain, so that the Roman administrators of that province had been compelled to appoint a special officer to deal with this peril, the Count of the Saxon Shore. At the same time the untamed Picts to the north of the great wall became more and more threatening.

But the outlying and backward province of Britain was of little importance when the very heart of the Empire was threatened. In A.D. 410 the Roman legions had to be withdrawn from Britain, and with that event a new chapter opens in the history of the British peoples. The Teutonic or German invaders were about to make their contribution to the population of the islands.

[For the general history of the period, Oman, *England before the Norman Conquest*; for prehistoric Britain, Boyd Dawkins, *Early Man in Britain*; for Celtic Britain, Rhys, *Celtic Britain*; for Roman Britain, Haverfield, *The Romanisation of Roman Britain*, Codrington, *Roman Roads*. English students will find it interesting to read the chapter on Roman Britain in the Victoria County History of their own county.]

[1] See the maps showing stages in the settlement of the Barbarians within the Empire, Atlas, Plates 2 (*a*) (*b*) and 3 (*a*) (*b*).

CHAPTER II

THE TEUTONIC INVADERS

(A.D. 410-825)

§ 1. *The Barbarian Conquerors and the Chaos they produced.*

THE Teutonic tribes who settled in Great Britain during the century following the Roman withdrawal came mainly from the low and marshy lands which lie between the Rhine and the Baltic Sea.[1] We know very little about their history before they sought their new homes, or about their customs and civilisation, except in so far as these were the same as those of other Teutonic tribes, of which a general description has been given to us by the Roman historians, Cæsar and Tacitus.

These tribes, as Cæsar and Tacitus describe them, had a very loose political organisation. Each tribe was divided into districts under the rule of chieftains, but the tribes as a whole seem to have had scarcely any common government, except that the chieftains took counsel together, and that the whole body of free men were consulted about a few greater issues, such as war against some neighbouring clan. Justice was administered in district courts, probably presided over by the chieftains; but freemen seem to have had a right to be present, and it was they who declared the 'custom of the folk,' by which any question ought to be determined. But there was no developed system of law, no hearing of witnesses, no examination of evidence—the real decision was arrived at either by hard swearing, or by an appeal to the gods by ordeal, or by a fight. The idea of crime, as an offence against the community, scarcely existed among them, except in the case of cowardice or treason in battle; even murder was not punishable by death, but could be compensated by a payment of the value of the dead man to his relatives, according to a fixed tariff of lives. There were rigid divisions

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 31.

of caste among these tribesmen, between the noble-born, the ordinary freemen, and the slaves or *theows*, who were employed as serfs in the cultivation of the land: and it was extremely hard, if not impossible, for any man to rise out of the caste into which he was born. This division into castes was general among the Aryan peoples, to which both the Teutons and the Celts belonged. It took many centuries to get rid of it altogether, and in India, instead of becoming weaker, it became stronger and more elaborate in course of time, and is still the most marked feature in Indian life.

One of the strongest ties among the ordinary Teuton tribesmen was that of kinship. Each village seems to have been, at any rate in theory, a group of kinsmen. The whole kin was responsible for the conduct of its members. It was in kinship groups that the freemen were marshalled for battle. And it would appear that the kinship groups worked their land more or less in partnership. They needed a large area of land for each group, for their methods of tillage were rude, and they cultivated different patches of their ground in each year, leaving the bulk of it waste for the pasture of their cattle. In all this there is no great difference between the customs of these tribes and those of the Celts before the Roman conquest.

But one peculiar institution these Teuton tribesmen possessed, which added greatly to their fighting efficiency, and probably accounted for their victories. Each chieftain prided himself upon maintaining a war-band of young warriors, whom he fed and housed and supplied with horse and armour. The members of these war-bands were sworn to absolute loyalty, even to the death; and youths of the proudest birth were not ashamed to belong to them. These bands of young warriors, who spent their lives wholly in hunting or fighting or preparing for war, were very useful in battle—much more useful than the bodies of ordinary freemen called from the plough. Their upkeep must have demanded the labour of large numbers of serfs, or heavy tribute from the freemen. And their existence meant constant warfare; the war-band had to be kept exercised, or it would become discontented; and its members expected to be rewarded for their services. These bands of comrades (*comites*) or *gesiths* were the most important feature of the Teutonic system. They must certainly have played a principal part in the conquest of Britain. And the tie of loyalty which bound chieftain

and comrades one to the other was the strongest tie existing among the Teutons. On the other hand, the rivalry of various chieftains and their war-bands was bound to make common action difficult.

We know very little about the adventures of these fierce barbarians in Britain during the century and a half following the Roman withdrawal, for the Romanised Celts have left us nothing but one or two vague and brief lamentations over the punishment which Britain had to endure for her sins; while the Teuton tribesmen could not write, and the scattered and conflicting statements about their conquests which have come down to us were only written down centuries after the events to which they refer.

One thing, however, is plain. They found it no easy business to conquer Great Britain. The other provinces of the Roman Empire were overrun by their barbarian conquerors with extraordinary rapidity and ease, but Great Britain had to be won foot by foot in a long and obstinate fight; much of it, and the whole of Ireland, were never conquered at all by these invaders. Indeed the Teutons, though they no doubt raided the coasts, do not seem to have ventured to make a settlement until forty years after the Romans had withdrawn their troops; the traditional date for the first settlement is A.D. 449, when a party of Jutes, under Hengist and Horsa, are said to have established themselves in Kent. It took more than a hundred years for the Teutons to win their way half way across England, and another long period passed ere they forced an access to the Bristol Channel (battle of Deorham, 577), and the Irish Sea (battle of Chester, 613), and so broke the Celtic states into three fragments.[1] Even then Cornwall, Wales and Cumbria, South-Western Scotland, the whole of the Highlands, and Ireland remained unconquered. This means that the Celts, in spite of their desertion by the Romans, offered a very desperate resistance—far more vigorous than was offered to the Teuton conquerors in any other part of Western Europe. The hero of this resistance, in the early stages, was a Romanised Briton, whose fame is preserved in the romantic legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table; but these legends have become so wildly distorted that it is impossible to get any historical facts out of them.

[1] See the map showing the stages in the Teutonic conquest, Atlas, Plate 32 (*a*).

The main reason for the length of the struggle was, no doubt, that instead of coming as a single organised host under a single captain, like the Ostrogoths (in Italy) under Theodoric, or the Franks (in Gaul) under Clovis, the conquerors of Britain came in many different tribal groups, led by many rival chieftains with their war-bands, each striving to carve out a little dominion for himself. We can recognise four different peoples among the conquerors. The Jutes, who may have come either from the Rhine valley or from Jutland in North Denmark, came in two distinct bands, one to Kent, another to the Isle of Wight and Hampshire. The Saxons, from the Elbe and Weser valleys, seem to have organised themselves at first into a big host, which tried to advance up the Thames Valley; but they were beaten back at the battle of Mount Badon (? 516), and they then split up into a number of distinct groups, East, Middle, South and West Saxons, each group fighting for its own hand. The Frisians, who came from the northern Dutch coast, certainly had a share in the invasions, but we cannot tell exactly where they settled. The Angles, from Holstein, seem to have been the only one of these peoples who transplanted themselves in a body, with wives, cattle and slaves, from their old homes to their new. They were the most numerous of these peoples, and ultimately they gave their name to the whole mixed population of South Britain; for England simply means Angleland. But even the Angles seem to have made many distinct and unconnected attacks—in East Anglia, in Lincolnshire, up the Trent Valley, in Yorkshire, and in Northumberland and the Lothians. Scholars have tried to work out the details of these settlements, but all their results are very uncertain; and we may well be content to say that, during the century following the Roman withdrawal, a large number of petty Teutonic kingdoms had established themselves in the eastern half of South Britain, from the Forth to the Solent, and that these petty settlements were separated from one another by the wide stretches of marsh, forest and moorland by which England was split up. Several of these little kingdoms are represented by modern English counties, such as Sussex and Essex (the South and East Saxons), Norfolk and Suffolk (the north folk and the south folk of the East Angles).

A prolonged and bitter struggle of this kind would mean a great deal of slaughter, and no doubt a much larger proportion of the Britons lost their lives than of the con-

quered provincials in Gaul. But we need not suppose that there was a wholesale massacre of the conquered, except perhaps in a few walled towns which angered the invaders by their resistance. The Teutons hated towns, and they left the Roman towns in Britain to fall into ruins. In the first conquests, in which the whole mass of freemen took part, there may have been a good deal of slaughter; but even at this stage it is likely that the Celtic serfs would be kept alive, for it would be wasteful to destroy them, and we know that the Teutons had used serfs in their own country. But in the later conquests, carried out mainly by the war-bands, who would need serf labour to till the lands they won, it is impossible to believe that they can have been destroyed. Those Celts who could afford to do so, including all the educated classes, would take refuge with their friends as the conquerors advanced; many of them fled to Brittany. But large numbers of humble labourers remained, and learnt to speak the language of their masters. The only strong argument in favour of a wholesale slaughter is that Christianity died out in the country occupied by the conquerors; but we have seen that it had won no firm hold upon the rural population. We must not therefore imagine that the population of England became purely Teutonic as a result of the invasions. It was probably mixed everywhere, but the Celtic element grew increasingly strong the further west the Teuton power was extended. In parts of Wessex, for example (*i.e.* Berkshire, Hampshire, Dorset), the existence of a Celtic population is recognised in the earliest laws. In Devonshire the population is of almost purely Celtic descent.

Thus the first result of the Teuton invasion was greatly to increase the disunity of the country. It was divided between several free Celtic realms, and many separate English kingdoms. From the first there was constant strife between these little States, as each chieftain strove to extend his dominion over his neighbours. And the result was that some seven or eight substantial English kingdoms emerged. The bigger of these included many smaller kingdoms, which became 'shires' or counties, but still had their hereditary chieftains or kinglets and their distinct folkmoots or assemblies of freemen. In the seventh and eighth centuries three of these kingdoms especially stood out, and seemed strong enough to try to claim lordship over the rest. These were Northumbria, a long narrow realm

extending from the Humber to the Forth; Mercia, a great square block filling the Midlands, and including many petty kingships; and Wessex, which included the country south of the Thames, from Devonshire to Sussex.[1]

While all this confusion reigned among the English settlers, things were no better among the independent Celts. We know very little about their history in this long period, but we know that there were many divisions among them. We can trace three groups in South Britain—West Wales, which included Devonshire and Cornwall; Wales proper; and Strathclyde and Cumbria, which extended from the Mersey to the Clyde. But there were further divisions within these groups; Galloway, for example, in the south-west of Scotland, was a practically independent realm, inhabited by Gaels or Picts, while the rest of Strathclyde was occupied by Britons. In the north of Scotland also there were several distinct kingdoms. And during this period the confusion was increased by the migration to the Western Highlands (503) of the Scots, a conquering Celtic people from the north of Ireland, who were, in course of time, to give their name to the whole kingdom.[2]

It was no wonder that in the midst of all this confusion civilisation decayed. When we reflect upon the condition of the islands in the sixth and seventh centuries, it seems incredible that out of such chaos there should, in the fulness of time, have grown a united nation.

While Britain was in this state of chaos, Western Europe also had fallen into the deepest barbarism, for the barbarian conquerors had overrun every part of it; the Franks and Burgundians in France, the Visigoths in Spain, the Ostrogoths and later the Lombards in Italy. And during the same period a great transformation was being carried out in the East. The Arabs, fired by the preaching of the prophet Mohammed, had, during the seventh century, overrun and conquered most of what remained of the eastern half of the Roman Empire, and the whole of Persia. Syria and Egypt were in their hands; they were expanding along the north coast of Africa; and at the beginning of the eighth century (711) they were to cross the straits of Gibraltar, and conquer the greater part of Spain.

But while chaos reigned everywhere else, in Ireland there was going on a wonderful development; for Ireland was free from the Teutonic conquerors, as she had been free

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 32 (*b*).
[2] See the map of early Scotland, Atlas, Plate 39.

from the Romans. In the years following the Roman withdrawal from Britain, St. Patrick, who had been trained in Gaul, undertook the task of completing the conversion of the Irish Gaels to Christianity, and from this time a wonderful revival of religion and learning made Ireland, for two or three centuries, the holy place of Europe, and the home of saints and missionaries. The country was divided into about eight tribal kingdoms, constantly at strife with one another. But that did not matter; the holy men withdrew themselves into settlements apart, where hundreds of pupils gathered round them, building their own wattled huts, and growing their own food, but devoting most of their time to the study of religion.[1] From these monastic settlements they went forth with admirable courage to preach the gospel in all the pagan lands of the West. They found their way as far afield as Iceland. They wandered over the whole of Western Germany, from the mouth of the Rhine to Switzerland, and converted many of the heathens of that region. But for us the most interesting of all their settlements was that which was made by St. Columba, a pupil of one of the great monastic schools in the north of Ireland, and a cousin of the King of the Scots, who had recently established themselves in Argyllshire. About 565, on the invitation of his cousin, Columba, with twelve companions, established himself in the little island of Iona, off the wild west coast of Scotland, and Iona henceforth became one of the holy places of Britain. Columba's disciples wandered over Northern Scotland, and converted the heathen Picts. And presently they undertook a still heavier task—that of converting the fierce Anglo-Saxon conquerors.

§ 2. *The Revival of Civilisation.*

The first attempt to convert the English was made, however, not by the Celtic missionaries, but by a band of monks headed by St. Augustine, who were sent by the great Pope Gregory I., and landed in Kent in 597; the site of their first church, Canterbury, has ever since been the centre of the English Church. But though Augustine and his followers converted Kent, and persuaded the kings of Northumbria and Essex to accept the new religion, a great heathen reaction led by the King of Mercia almost destroyed their work. The real conversion of the English did not begin until in 635 an exiled Northumbrian king, Oswald,

[1] See the map of early Ireland, Atlas, Plate 41.

brought from Iona the great Celtic missionary St. Aidan. From the monastery which Aidan founded on the island of Lindisfarne missionaries went forth over all England, and in a generation the whole country had adopted the new faith. Thus the English owed their conversion mainly to their Celtic neighbours.

Unfortunately, in the long period during which the Celtic Christians had been cut off by the heathen English from the main body of Christians on the Continent, considerable differences had sprung up between them, partly on minor points, such as the date of Easter, but also on the greater question of the way in which the Church should be organised. In 664, a council of English bishops was called at Whitby, to decide whether the Roman or the Celtic system should be followed. This was the first common action taken by all the English States. The council decided to adopt the Roman methods, and so brought the new Christian Church into contact and agreement with the rest of the Western world. A continental bishop, Theodore of Tarsus, was sent by the Pope to organise the new English Church. He divided the land into bishoprics, more or less corresponding with the little kingdoms;[1] and the councils which these bishops held from time to time formed the first recognition of the unity of the English realms. Unfortunately the decision of 664 at first meant that a new cleavage was introduced between the Celtic and the Teutonic regions of the islands, just when their adoption of a common faith promised to unite them. But this did not last very long: most of the Celtic lands gradually accepted the Roman order, and thus all the peoples of the islands had at last something in common. For them, as for the rest of the European peoples, a common religion was to provide a binding force. It could only work slowly, and was not of itself enough to weld them into a nation; but without it unity could never have come.

The adoption of Christianity did not merely bring the islands once more into contact with the other peoples of Europe: it brought them again under the influence of the great heritage of Western civilisation, of which, through these dark centuries, the Church was the only guardian. They felt not only the influence of Christian morals and Christian thought; through the Church they also felt the influence of the traditions of old Rome, although in a very faint and remote way; and none of the barbarian

[1] See the map of Anglo-Saxon dioceses, Atlas, Plate 37 (*a*).

tribes ever succeeded in achieving much that was of value until this happened. Under the stimulus of educated priests and monks, intellectual life sprang into being; and for a time Northern England at least was probably more civilised than any of the countries of Western Europe where the German barbarians had settled. The Venerable Bede, who wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* in the monastery of Jarrow-on-Tyne, and died in 735, was the only great writer of Europe in his age. When the conquering Frankish kings began in the eighth century to tame the savagery of Germany, and to bring that country, in its turn, indirectly under the influence of Rome, it was to England that they sent for missionaries to complete the work which the Irish preachers had earlier begun, and the organisation of the Christian Church in Germany was due to an Englishman, St. Boniface. When the greatest of the Frankish kings, Charlemagne (768-814), having made himself master of all the West, tried to restore the Roman Empire, and to make his court the centre of a revival of learning, his chief adviser and helper was the English scholar Alcuin. In Ireland also and (to a less degree) in Scotland, learning and religion made progress during this period; so that, on the whole, the islands had begun to emerge from their darkness, and were probably for a time the most enlightened region in Europe.

But the old strife between the English kingdoms and their Celtic neighbours, and among the English kingdoms themselves, still continued, though with much less ferocity. The main feature of the seventh and eighth centuries was the long struggle for supremacy between the three chief English kingdoms, Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex. At first Northumbria led, but it was weakened by divisions between its northern and southern halves, and by its strife with its Celtic neighbours; its greatness may be said to end with the crushing victory of the Picts of Scotland at Nectansmere in 685. Then Mercia succeeded to the leadership. Its greatest king, Offa (758-796), not only mastered all the little kingdoms of the Midlands, but beat back the Welsh, penning them behind the Dyke to which his name is still attached. But Mercia was not a unified State; it was a bundle of vassal kingdoms, and was only formidable under the rule of a great leader. Finally Wessex, the kingdom of the south, achieved supremacy over all the English kingdoms, under the leadership of Egbert, who succeeded to the West Saxon throne in 802. He conquered Devon, which was still Celtic; he defeated the Mercians at Ellandun

(825); he made Kent and Sussex recognise his overlordship; and within the next few years all the little kings in England had offered him obedience and allegiance. Here, for the first time, was something resembling a single Kingdom of England; though, in fact, the little kingdoms still maintained their separate existence, and real unity was far from being secured.

It is a strange coincidence that just at the time when the English tribes were attaining some unity, a great united realm had been organised in Western Europe. During the eighth century the Frankish kings of the Carolingian house had rapidly made themselves the hope of Western civilisation. They had beaten back the Saracens at the battle of Poitiers (732), when they seemed likely to conquer France as they had already conquered Spain. They had unified all France and Western Germany under their rule. They had taken the Church and the Papacy under their guardianship, and tamed the fierce Lombards in Italy. They had begun to bring the still unconquered tribes of Central and Northern Germany under civilising influences, and had given their protection and help to Christian missionaries preaching in these lands. They had even begun to conquer the Slavonic tribes east of the Elbe, and fought successfully against the Avars, a Mongolian raiding tribe who had fixed themselves in Hungary. Something dimly resembling the old order of the Roman Empire seemed to be emerging in Western Europe.[1] In A.D. 800, just two years before Egbert ascended the West Saxon throne, the feeling of all good Europeans and lovers of civilisation that the days of peace and law were coming back again, received expression when the Pope placed upon the head of Charlemagne, the greatest of all the Frankish kings, an imperial crown, and hailed him as Emperor, as the reviver of old Rome, as the successor of the long line of Roman emperors who had given peace to the world.

But the empire of Charlemagne, like the united England of Egbert, was still too weak to stand any severe strain; and upon both of them there was to fall, during the ninth century, a terrible series of trials, which for a time destroyed all the work that had been done, and plunged not only the islands, but the whole of Western Europe, into a long new period of barbarism and anarchy. Charlemagne's empire was divided among his descendants and torn asunder

[1] See the map of Charlemagne's Empire, Atlas, Plate 4, and compare with it the Mohammedan Empire in the south.

by their quarrels, while their nobles set up for themselves, and what is known as feudalism came into being. Meanwhile the once great empire was attacked on all sides—by the Saracens in Italy and the south; by the Magyars, a new wave of Mongolian invaders, from Hungary and the south-east; by the Slavonic tribes, whom Charlemagne had held in check, on the east; and, above all, by the fierce Norse and Danish raiders from the Scandinavian lands of the north. Under these attacks, combined with its internal weakness, the empire of Charlemagne rapidly collapsed.

England and the rest of the islands were subjected only to the attacks of the Norse and Danish raiders, but the full force of the storm fell upon them even more severely than upon France. These attacks had, indeed, already begun before Egbert's time, and were beginning to be serious before his death. His recently created and loosely organised power was not strong enough to stand the strain; during the generation after his death the conquering Northmen settled in large numbers in the lands which had accepted his supremacy, and a new and very important element was added to the mixed population of the islands.

§ 3. *England in 800 A.D.*

Yet the appearance of the first king of all England marks an era; and before we turn to consider the raids and settlements of the Northmen, it will be worth while to review briefly what was the condition at which England had arrived in Egbert's time, four centuries after the first Teutonic invasions; especially because some of the features of this period were to survive, and to have a lasting influence upon English institutions.

We can form but a dim idea of the mode of life of the English at this period, for there is no material of a detailed kind until the time of the Norman Conquest; and a yet dimmer notion of the life of the other parts of the islands. But we must conceive of the great mass of Englishmen as probably living in village communities, and deriving their livelihood from the labours of the fields. Many of the villagers were freemen, holding substantial amounts of land, often about 120 acres, and being liable for service in the army and for attendance at the law courts. Many others were serfs, not owing these obligations, but on the other hand not free to leave their land, and subject to many vexatious dues and services to their masters, whose land they had to till as well as their own. These village

communities (whether free or servile) were practically self-supporting. They grew their own food, made their own clothes and utensils, and needed scarcely anything from outside, except iron for their ploughshares and (in most villages) salt. Therefore the villagers knew and cared very little about what went on beyond the limits of the village. It was very difficult to stir them up to meet a common danger, as the Danish invasions showed; and it was almost impossible to create among them a sense of patriotism for England as a whole; England as a whole meant nothing to them.

The old military obligations of the freemen seem almost to have fallen into disuse; because in the petty wars of the kingdoms the fighting was carried on, as perhaps it had mainly been carried on almost from the beginning, by the king's *comrades* or special fighting men. This class had consequently grown very much in importance. They were now known as *thegns* or royal servants, and they had swallowed up all the old hereditary aristocracy. They had access to the king's person. The chief among them were members of his council. They were rewarded for their services with grants of land, often including whole villages of serfs. In short, they were tending to become a sort of feudal nobility, although they had not yet obtained formal legal powers over the freemen.

At the head of all was the King, whose position was now, in the greater kingdoms, much more exalted than that of the chieftains of the first conquering bands. Not only the greater extent of his kingdom, but the solemnity of Christian coronation, had raised him in dignity; and now all the chief men of the kingdom were his *thegns* or servants. He maintained himself, and the cost of his government, chiefly by the profits of his private estates and the proceeds of the law courts; and his court had to travel about unceasingly in order to eat up the produce of each of his estates in turn. In governing his realm, he was assisted by a council of wise men, or *Witan*, which generally included the ealdormen, who were the administrative heads of the shires, together with the bishops and the leading thegns. This body was the only common ruling authority of the whole kingdom; and it was with its advice that the king made new laws, or took measures of attack or defence against other kings. But the king had no official staff, apart from a few chaplains who did such secretarial work as was necessary. There was no

regular machinery of government, and this made it impossible that effective control should be exercised over the whole of a wide realm like that of Mercia, and still more over all England.

The highest educative and civilising influences at work in the islands were, of course, those of the Church; and it was perhaps only through the Church that men felt themselves to be members of something wider and greater than their village community or their shire-kingdom. The organisation of the Church, however, was as yet far from perfect. Many villages, no doubt, had churches of their own; and some may have had settled priests, who were kept up by a payment of one-tenth of the produce of the village lands. But this system was as yet far from universal. The main centres of spiritual and intellectual life were the monasteries, inhabited by groups of men who had vowed themselves to a religious life. They were the only schools and centres of learning. Some of them did splendid work, but generally, in the eighth century, they were undergoing some decay, and the first flush of enthusiasm for the new religion was growing faint. England, in fact, had to pass through many searching experiences yet before she was to achieve either real unity or real civilisation.

It is a remarkable fact that the Teutonic settlers in England, who had begun their attacks as pirates and sea-rovers, had almost abandoned the sea from the time of their settlement. The English of A.D. 800 were not a seafaring people. When they were attacked, as they were now to be, by the most daring mariners who have ever been seen on the seas of the world, they were altogether unable to meet them on their own element.

[As before, Oman's *England before the Norman Conquest* provides the best general summary of recent knowledge. For the contemporary history of Europe, Church's *Beginning of the Middle Ages*, and Fletcher's *Making of Western Europe*. See also the first volume of Hume Brown's *History of Scotland*, and Bury's *St. Patrick*. Freeman's *Old English History* deals with this period; also Green's *Making of England*, vivid but rather unreliable. For the early settlements, Leeds' *Archæology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements*. There is a good description of early English society in Miss B. A. Lees' *Alfred the Great*, and a lively and picturesque one in the first volume of Fletcher's *Introductory History of England*.]

CHAPTER III

THE INVASIONS OF THE NORTHMEN

(A.D. 825-1066)

§ 1. *The Vikings and their Ravages.*

THE next wave of invaders were the Northmen or Vikings, who came from Norway and Denmark, the one a land of barren mountains penetrated by deep fjords, the other a land of sandy flats intersected by tortuous channels;[1] both therefore lands which naturally bred sailors. These Northmen were of Teutonic stock, but as distinct from the Germans as the British Celts were from the Gaelic Celts. They had taken no part in the earlier invasions of the Roman Empire, and we know nothing about their early history; for though they later developed a splendid literature, this was not until they had learnt the art from the Christian world, and especially from the Celts of Ireland.

With inexplicable suddenness they burst out in all directions from their original homes towards the end of the eighth century. Their ravages and adventures extended over the whole of Western Europe during more than a century. Then great bands of them settled down in the British Islands and in France; those who remained at home organised civilised and Christian kingdoms; their piratical raids in Europe came to an end as suddenly as they had begun; and their extraordinary daring at sea showed itself instead in the exploration of Greenland and the shores of North America. In this later period they also produced, in the sagas, some of the finest poetry of war and adventure that has ever been written.

It is impossible to exaggerate the energy and daring of these Vikings during the great Viking age, which may be said to extend from A.D. 789 (the date of the first recorded raid in England) to A.D. 913 (the date of their settlement in Normandy). Vikings from Sweden swept into Russia, and laid the foundations of the Russian kingdom. Others made

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 31.

their way down the Russian rivers to the Black Sea, and entered the service of the Eastern Emperor at Constantinople. The main bands kept the whole of Western Europe in a state of terror, so that a special petition, *A furore Normannorum libera nos*, found a place in the Litany of many Western churches. Their long open boats, with high prows and sterns carved into the likeness of dragons or serpents, were manned by about sixty men apiece, whose painted shields hung over the bulwarks. Without map or compass, driven by oar and sail, and steered only by a long paddle on the right or 'steer-board' side of the ship, these open boats ventured through the roughest seas, swept up all the great rivers of Germany and France, and terrorised even the distant shores of Spain, Italy and Northern Africa. Nothing dismayed the Vikings, and nobody seemed to be able to resist them. They began by sudden plundering descents, in which they showed the utmost ferocity, especially towards the priests of the Christian religion, for they were fierce pagans. Their next stage was to make a base on some convenient island or headland, from which they ravaged the mainland, and this they did all along the coasts of North-Western Europe. Their final stage was the systematic conquest and settlement of a large area; and when they reached that stage (which happened in France and England), they showed a remarkable capacity for assimilating and improving the civilisation of the people among whom they settled.

Such a people, in spite of their ferocity and treachery, formed a wonderful enrichment of any land in which they settled; and we may rejoice that it was mainly upon the British Islands that they concentrated their attention. Their first recorded raid was in England, in A.D. 789; and in England, Ireland and Scotland they settled in larger numbers than anywhere else. Unlike the earlier Teutonic hordes, they penetrated to almost every part of the islands.

It was to Ireland that they seem first to have given their serious attention. During the first thirty years of the ninth century they raided it unceasingly, and the rest of the West had peace. By the middle of the ninth century half of the country was said to have submitted to them, and a Northman was in 853 over-king of all Ireland. But they did not settle in very large numbers. They chiefly established themselves in and round the three ports of Dublin, Waterford and Wexford, which they founded and turned into thriving centres of trade.[1] Most of them

[1] See the map of Ireland, Atlas, Plate 41.

were expelled by the Irish Celts early in the tenth century; but they had learnt much, and apparently owed to the Irish poets their first training in the art of poetry. Unhappily their ravages brought to an end the golden age of Irish letters and religion.

They also paid repeated visits, and in great numbers, to the coasts of Scotland, though we have little record of these attacks. They conquered and peopled the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and the county of Caithness. They settled in considerable numbers on the shores of the Moray Firth, and southwards along the coast as far as the Forth. They made themselves masters of most of the Hebrides, which they called the Sudereys, or Southern Islands, and of the Isle of Man; that is why there is a Bishop of Sodor (Sudereys) and Man. And the same bands who came by this western route also settled in large numbers in Cumberland, hitherto mainly Celtic, and along the north-western shores of England, as far as the Mersey and the Dee. Of most of these attacks there is no historical record, except in the names of the places where they settled; for wherever you see a place-name ending in *by* or *thwaite*, you know it was a Viking settlement.

But the main attacks on England were directed against the inviting and accessible east coast, and here it was, in the end, that the scattered bands of Vikings gathered themselves into great hosts, and deliberately set to work to subjugate the whole country.

The first serious attacks on England were made in the later years of Egbert's reign, and on the whole that king got the better of all attacks in Wessex. But they continued with growing frequency and growing seriousness during the reigns of his son and his grandsons, while the opposite continental coasts suffered equally. At length, in the middle of the ninth century, the Danes began to make systematic attempts to conquer and settle. In 854 they wintered for the first time on English soil, in the Isle of Thanet. In 867 a great swarm of them descended upon Yorkshire, from which they were never again driven out, and where they created a little kingdom. In 869 or 870 another band conquered East Anglia, thus establishing a second Danish kingdom in England.[1]

The most striking feature of all these attacks is that, except in Wessex, no effective organised resistance was anywhere offered to them. Each little district or old tribal

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 32 (*c*).

kingdom seemed to consider that it was none of its business to help its neighbours, and, when its own turn came, found itself quite unable to resist. Only in Wessex did the English hold their own against the raiders, who were constantly beaten back. And at length, in 871, the Danes decided to concentrate their attacks upon Wessex. If Wessex had succumbed, all England would have become a Danish realm.

§ 2. *Alfred the Great and the Emperor Kings.*

The desperate struggle of Wessex against the Danes brought into the foreground the first great national hero of England, and the noblest of English kings, Alfred the Great.[1] Alfred was the youngest of the four grandsons of Egbert who successively occupied the West Saxon throne. From his earliest youth he had shown an exceptional vigour and intelligence of mind, and this had been stimulated by a pilgrimage to Rome, which he made with his royal father when he was a child. From the age of seventeen he played a leading part, under his brother Ethelred, in the endless struggle against the Danes, and his gallantry and resourcefulness formed one of the chief reasons for the success of the West Saxons. When the great attack came in 871, Alfred, then about twenty-three years old, was the principal leader on the West Saxon side. Many desperate pitched battles were fought in this year. In one of them, on Ashdown, Alfred's generalship gained a brilliant victory. But the Danes were not to be defeated in a single fight. In a later battle they killed King Ethelred; and now Alfred became king, and assumed the whole burden of the resistance against the conquerors, and of defending Christianity and civilisation. It took him eight years of unceasing fighting. He was, in the later part of these years, reduced to the lowest ebb, and had to take refuge among the marshes of Athelney in Somerset, while the triumphant Danes devoured his Christmas fare at the royal manor of Chippenham. But he emerged from his retreat to inflict a final and decisive defeat upon the Danes. They were driven out of Wessex. By the treaty of Chippenham (878) they were compelled to admit their defeat and to accept Christianity; and a definition of boundaries eight years later left Alfred in control not only of Wessex, but of half of Mercia, south-west of a line drawn from London to Chester.[2]

[1] The best modern biography of Alfred the Great is by Miss B. A. Lees (*Heroes of the Nations*).

[2] The division is shown in Atlas, Plate 32 (*c*).

In this enlarged realm Alfred set to work to organise the forces of resistance. He built fortified towns, to be centres of defence. He reorganised the *fyrd*, or national levy of freemen, which had long been almost useless, because most of the fighting had long been done by the professional fighting class of the *thegns*. He even organised a small fighting fleet, borrowing Frisian sailors for the purpose, because the English had ceased to be a seafaring race. The result was that when a new storm of Danish attack burst upon him in 885-895, he definitely got the better of his foes, and greatly strengthened the position of his kingdom.

Alfred's reign left more than half of England under Danish rule, and in a state of anarchy. But in the region which remained under his control there was far greater strength and efficiency than there had ever been before, and Wessex could look forward confidently to the reconquest of the rest of England, which was to be achieved by Alfred's successors. Moreover Alfred established friendly relations with the neighbouring Celtic kingdoms, which recognised that his strength was their chief defence against a common danger. Cornwall had become practically a part of Wessex, perhaps before Alfred's time. The British princes of South and North Wales offered him their allegiance; and he welcomed at his court scholar-monks from Ireland.

But, great as he was as a soldier and an organiser of victory, Alfred was much more. He not only gave to his countrymen a noble tradition of steadfast valour; he also laboured to obtain a real improvement of civilisation. For the Danish raiders had been terribly destructive. They had brought anarchy and disorder everywhere; they had destroyed many of the monasteries, which were the chief centres of enlightenment; in short, they had woefully set back civilisation. Alfred revised, improved and codified the laws. He restored public order, and earned the title of Protector of the Poor. Above all, seeing, as only a really great man could in that age of brute force, that the strength of a nation's life depends upon the chance which it offers for making the best of the highest gifts of its citizens, he laboured to revive letters and learning. He restored monasteries. He started a school for the sons of nobles at his own court. He began the history of real English literature, by translating with his own hand the books which he thought most likely to help his people to think wisely. And in order to keep alive the traditions of the past, which make the soul of a nation, he set his monks

to work in compiling the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which is henceforth, for a long period, our chief source of information about the fortunes of the English. We know too little about Alfred's many-sided work to be able to describe it in detail. But we know enough to say that there has never been in all history a more noble or devoted king.

During the seventy-five years following the death of Alfred, his successors, building on the foundations he had laid, established the supremacy of the reorganised Wessex over all the other States in Great Britain (English, Danish, or Celtic), and for the first time gave a semblance of political unity to the whole island. Alfred's son, Edward the Elder (899-924), with the aid of his warlike sister Ethelfleda, gradually reconquered Danish Mercia and East Anglia, securing his conquests, step by step, by the erection of *burhs* or fortresses, some of which became the administrative centres of the new shires into which he or his successor divided out this part of England. Unlike the southern shires, the midland shires are of more or less equal size, and are named after their chief towns. They are artificial creations, and their formation shows that the old tribal divisions of this district had at last been got rid of, under the pressure of the Danish conquest. When the Midlands had been conquered and organised, the Danish king of Yorkshire thought it wise to offer his submission, though this region remained a distinct dependent realm for some time. Farther north the little English region between the Tyne and the Forth, which had escaped Danish conquest, also recognised the overlordship of the West Saxon king, while the princes of Wales, who had paid allegiance to Alfred, continued to recognise, in a vague way, the superiority of his successor.

Scotland also now for the first time entered into political relations with England. Scotland, as we have seen, had suffered terribly from the raids of the Vikings, who had sacked most of the Scottish and Pictish strongholds, and devastated Iona and other monastic settlements. It was partly, no doubt, the pressure of the Vikings that led to the union of the two Scottish kingdoms, the realm of the Scots in the west, and the Pictish realm of Alban or Caledonia in the east. This was in 843, and from that date there is always a united kingdom of Scotland. But it was a very small and poor kingdom as yet. The Northmen held Caithness and Sutherland and the Western Isles. The British kingdom of Strathclyde still survived in the south-west,

though it was very weak, and was tending to pass under the control of the King of Scots. In the year 919 both of these kings, the King of Scotland and the King of Strathclyde, recognised the supremacy of the English king, 'taking him,' as the *Chronicle* puts it, 'for father and lord.' This was later made the basis for a claim of feudal supremacy on the part of the English kings over Scotland. It did not mean anything so definite as that. But it did mean that the King of Wessex, who may henceforth be called the King of England, was recognised throughout Britain as the most powerful ruler in the island, and the best source of protection against the Northmen.

But this vague superiority did not amount to much, and Athelstan, Edward's very able successor (924-940), had to fight hard to maintain it. He suppressed the Danish kingdom in Yorkshire, and brought it under his direct rule. And presently we find him at war with the King of Scots, and invading his territory as far north as Aberdeen (933), while his fleet penetrated the Moray Firth. The King of Scots was apparently trying to extend his power by getting control both over Strathclyde and over the English region of Northumbria between the Forth and the Tweed or Tyne, both of which districts were ultimately to become parts of the kingdom of Scotland. King Constantine did not submit to his defeat of 933, which may be said to mark the beginning of the long war of independence between Scotland and England. In 937 he formed a confederacy against the English king, which included not only Strathclyde, but the Northmen of Cumberland, and even those of Ireland. A great battle was fought at Brunanburh, which was probably somewhere near the Solway Firth, though many other places claim to have been the scene of the famous fight. It is perhaps the best known battle of early English history, for a long and stirring poem about it has been preserved in the English *Chronicle*. The slaughter was tremendous, and, at the end of a long day's fighting, three kings lay dead on the field. Athelstan won a complete victory, and thereafter enjoyed undisputed superiority over the island.

We must not exaggerate the reality of this general dominion: Athelstan's successors had to fight against their rebellious vassals time and again, and over the region north of the Humber, or at any rate north of the Tyne, their authority was never more than nominal. But, for all that, they were great and formidable kings. They began to assume magnificent titles, such as *Rex totius Britanniæ*,

and even to borrow titles used by the Roman emperors. Their alliance was sought after by the ruling princes of the Continent. For in this period Europe, like England, was beginning to recover from the disorder of the previous time; from the ruins of the empire of Charlemagne the kingdoms of Germany and France began to arise. At first, and for a long time, Germany was the strongest State in Europe, and its ruler, Otto the Great, revived in 962 the title of Roman Emperor, which continued to be attached to the German kingdom until the beginning of the nineteenth century. France was for a long time much less powerful; the Capetian dynasty, which ascended the throne in 987, was for nearly two centuries overshadowed by its great feudal vassals, and could only count upon the allegiance of a little island of land round Paris—the Ile de France. Still there was now a kingdom of France as well as a kingdom of Germany; and with both of these realms, as well as with some of the greater feudal principalities of France, the powerful English State which Athelstan ruled began to enter into relations. Otto of Germany married one of Athelstan's sisters; and Athelstan's four other sisters also found husbands among the leading princes of Europe. The realm of England was beginning to take a place among the great States that were emerging out of the chaos of the dark ages.

With one exception, Athelstan's next successors were all men of sufficient vigour and ability to maintain the high standing of their kingdom. But it was under the rule of his fourth successor, Edgar (959-975), that the greatness of the new empire-realm reached its highest point. The whole reign was practically untouched by invasion from without or disorder within, and in the troublous times that followed it was looked back upon as a sort of golden age. The vassal states remained submissive; and the chronicles record with pride how, during a visit to Chester in 973, Edgar was met by eight vassal kings, who plighted their troth to him, and rowed him in state up the Dee as far as the Church of St. John. All these eight kings came from Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man. But the fact that there were so many rulers entitled to bear the royal title shows how insecure was the chief king's hold over his extended realm.

The 'Emperor-Kings,' as the sovereigns from Athelstan to Edgar are sometimes called, did their best to improve and strengthen the organisation of their dominions. They

made many new laws, with the aid of the Witan. Edgar, in particular, tried to strengthen the judicial system by creating, or perhaps reorganising, a series of Hundred (or district) Courts; and, guided by his great archbishop and counsellor Dunstan, he strove also to reinvigorate the Church, especially by enforcing stricter rules upon the monasteries. But without the development of an efficient machinery of government any permanently effective control of the whole country was impossible. Even Athelstan and Edgar had to leave a very high degree of independence to great ealdormen and (in the Danish districts) earls, who could only be kept in subjection by constant vigour on the part of the king. The strength of the united realm depended wholly upon the character and ability of the king; and when a weak ruler succeeded to the throne, it rapidly fell to pieces.

§ 3. *The Second Danish Conquest, and the Coming of the Normans.*

Such an one was Ethelred the Redeless, who became king in 978, and whose reign, which lasted till 1016, was perhaps the most disastrous that England has ever seen. During this reign there was a sudden and violent renewal of the Danish attacks; for in Denmark and Norway new consolidated kingdoms were arising, and the more adventurous spirits took to the old ways of piracy as a means of escape. But the greater England they attacked ought now to have been far more able to resist them than it had been in the time of the first invasions; and under a king like Athelstan it would undoubtedly have done so. Ethelred was quite incapable of showing the necessary vigour and leadership. Local ealdormen or earls did their best to resist the raiders, as in the battle of Maldon in 991, when the local levies of Essex fought gallantly against a great Danish host. But they got no help from the king, who was never at hand, and whose only device for dealing with the enemy was the fatal one of buying him off. Time and again vast sums were raised by heavy taxes on land, to be paid away as Danegeld: it was like trying to drive away wasps with saucers of honey.

A still more fatal device was attempted in 1002, when Ethelred organised a wholesale massacre of the Danes, many of whom had recently settled in England. This only brought down upon the land a greater host than ever; and its leader, Sweyn, who had at first been a

pirate chief, but had since succeeded to the throne of Denmark, deliberately set himself to subjugate England as a whole. The land was harried and desolated in a continuous series of campaigns. At one moment, in sheer despair, almost the whole country gave up the struggle and accepted Sweyn's supremacy. But after Sweyn's death in 1014 English patriotism revived, and the wretched Ethelred, who had taken refuge in Normandy, returned to ruin his subjects once more. His death, in 1016, came too late to make the salvation of the country possible. Sweyn's son, Canute, was already master of the greater part of it; and although Edmund Ironside, the gallant son of the worthless Ethelred, and the last hero of the house of Alfred, made a noble struggle in 1016, his premature death rendered further resistance hopeless, and the line of Alfred gave place to a Danish king, Canute (1016-1035).

The confusion of the Danish war was the occasion for a very important change in the north. In the year 1018 the King of the Scots attacked the English district of Lothian, between the Tweed and the Forth, and being victorious at the battle of Carham (on the Tweed) was able to incorporate this region in his kingdom. Ever since 1018 Lothian has been part of the kingdom of Scotland, and its chief town, Edinburgh, soon became the capital of the kingdom.

Canute, the first Danish King of England, was a very powerful prince, one of the greatest sovereigns in Europe in his time. For he was not only King of England, with a vague claim to superiority over Wales and Scotland, and a still vaguer over Ireland; he was also King of Denmark and of Norway.[1] But he ruled all this extensive empire from England; and, though he had shown himself both brutal and treacherous in his early days, he did his best to win the favour of his English subjects, filling his court with Englishmen, and reviving and strengthening English laws and customs. Yet even Canute was unable to wield effective control over his whole realm, simply because there did not exist any regular machinery for supervising the government of the various districts. He had to divide England into a number of great earldoms, whose rulers were left very much to themselves even under a strong king, and became almost independent princes under a weak king. This became very clear when, after Canute's death, disputes broke out between his two sons, Harold and Hardicanute. It became clearer still when, on the death of

[1] See the map of Canute's empire, Atlas, Plate 33.

Hardicanute (1042), the short line of Danish kings of England came to an end, and the exiled son of Ethelred the Redeless came from Normandy. where he had taken refuge, to assume the crown as Edward the Confessor. During Edward's long and feeble reign (1042-1066), the real rulers of England were the great earls, especially Godwin, Earl of Wessex, and his sons, and Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and his sons.[1] England, which had been so painfully united, seemed to be falling asunder again, breaking up into great vassal-states like the feudal principalities into which France was divided.

Edward was an amiable, pious prince, quite incapable of remedying this growing weakness of his realm. Indeed he seems to have had little interest in England. He had been bred in Normandy, where during the last hundred years (since 913) the Viking conquerors had thoroughly settled down, and had adopted and improved upon all that was best in the civilisation of France. Especially they had established splendid and learned monasteries, such as that of Bec, where the famous abbot, Lanfranc, was attracting students from all parts of Europe to hear his lectures. To the mild and religious Edward the disorderly and backward condition of England which had resulted from the long Danish wars, and especially the corrupt and inefficient state into which the Church had fallen, compared very ill with the good order and civilisation of his Norman friends. He filled his court with Norman favourites, much to the indignation of the English. He appointed Norman bishops, who were very unpopular with their unruly English clergy. Above all he devoted himself to building a splendid new abbey, on a greater scale than had ever before been known in England, in the noble new style of architecture which the Normans had developed. It is Edward the Confessor's chief claim to be remembered that he was the founder of Westminster Abbey, the noble fane which has become the very heart of the British Commonwealth; though the actual building as we know it belongs to a later date.

When Edward died (1066) there was no grown man of the royal house available to succeed him; and the nobles of the realm elected Harold, Earl of Wessex, the most powerful of their number. Harold was to be the last of the old English kings. His position was very insecure from the beginning. The greatest of the rival earls, Edwin and Morcar, the Earls of Mercia and Northumbria, were jealous

[1] See the map of the earldoms, Plates 32 (*d*) and 33.

of his elevation to the throne, and acted as independent rulers in their own provinces. Moreover England was threatened simultaneously with attack by two formidable foreign rulers, the King of Norway, and the mighty Duke of Normandy, who was a cousin of Edward the Confessor, and put forward a claim to the English throne. Harold dealt valiantly with the invaders. He attacked the Norsemen at Stamford Bridge, and gained a victory over them. But while he was still in the north, came the news that William, Duke of Normandy, had landed on the coast of Sussex. Harold hastened south to resist him, but he could get no help from any part of England except his own earldom of Wessex. Nevertheless at the battle of Hastings he fought a very gallant fight, which lasted all through a long day, the English fighting on foot in serried masses, against the clouds of Norman arrows and the fierce charges of the mail-clad Norman knights. Only when the English were persuaded, by a feigned retreat, to break their solid shield-wall, did the Normans begin to get the better of them. Even then, Harold and his personal retainers fought on desperately, till all were slain.

The Normans had won. The last conquest of England had begun; and the half-unified realm was to pass under the rule of hard taskmasters, but taskmasters who knew how to hammer stubborn metal into shape.

§ 4. *The Need for the Norman Conquest.*

The old English kingdom, in spite of its apparently brilliant prospects under the successors of Alfred, had indeed failed just because its rulers had never found the means of really welding together the varied races of whom their subjects were made up, unifying their laws and customs, and checking the tendency of various districts to break off and become practically distinct States. This failure had become most plain in the last generation before Hastings. It was the disunity of England that made the Norman Conquest possible; but the disunity of England also made the Norman Conquest a necessary, if painful, stage in the development of the nation.

The Danish conquests had obliterated the old distinctions between the little English kingdoms, but they had introduced new ones in their place. There were three distinct bodies of law or customs among the English, as King Canute noted when he tried to codify them: the law

of Wessex, the law of English Mercia, and the Danelaw, and these three had to be somehow worked into one. There were wide differences of language or dialect also. And on the top of this, the independence of the great earls, who were fast becoming the hereditary rulers of large semi-independent provinces, introduced new political distinctions. The lesser nobility also were acquiring control over their tenants and neighbours—a sort of control resembling what later came to be known as 'feudal' superiority. There were still many thousands of free landowners in England, who recognised no superior but the king and his courts; these were to be found more especially in the Danish regions. But there were also many thousands who had given up their full freedom, and had become, by what was called 'commendation,' the 'men' or 'vassals' of neighbouring thegns, in order to be able to resort to their protection in the unceasing chaos. Shire Courts and Hundred Courts still went on, and the freemen were supposed to attend them; but the king found it increasingly difficult to exercise control over these courts, or to get into direct relations with his free subjects, because he had no efficient machinery for doing so: more and more he was content to leave them under the management of the great earls and the thegns. In short, there was neither order nor system nor clearly understood law in England. That could only be given by the firm hand of a master with a genius for organisation.

Finally, in all the countries of the islands, it is unquestionable that the arts of civilisation had suffered greatly from the long turbulence of the last two centuries. Neither Alfred's work, nor that of Edgar and Dunstan, nor all the well-meaning laws of Athelstan and Canute, had availed to prevent this. In the Middle Ages civilisation depended especially upon the Church, and in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland the Church had fallen into corruption, and the priests were ignorant and undisciplined.

On the Continent of Europe during this period a great reform movement was at work in the Church. It had begun, in the tenth century, at the monastery of Cluny in Burgundy; and it was in the monasteries that it found its chief strength, just because the monks were freer than the ordinary or 'secular' clergy from the corrupting influence of princely and baronial ambitions. In many of the monasteries there began a real revival of learning and teaching: the abbey of Bec, in Normandy, to which we

have already referred, was only one of many such. And gradually, through the influence mainly of the monks, the idea grew that religion and civilisation could only revive, and the miseries of men be relieved, if the Church, which stood for Right in the midst of Might, could be made free, and emancipated from the control of the Emperor, who claimed to nominate the Pope, of the kings, who claimed to appoint bishops, and of the nobles, who often sold benefices to the highest bidder, thus committing the sin of 'Simony' or selling the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Church must be free; it must also cut itself off from the world and from worldly influences; hence the demand for the enforcement of celibacy among the clergy, for the rule of celibacy, though recognised, was widely disregarded, especially in England. These new ideals had a wide appeal, and they did much to awaken a new spiritual and intellectual life throughout Western Europe. They were winning their greatest victories just when the Norman Conquest of England took place, and the Normans were the most enthusiastic disciples and upholders of the reform movement. It was from the Normans in Italy that the great Pope Gregory VII., who was engaged at this time in a desperate struggle with the Emperor (Henry IV. of Germany) to secure the complete freedom of the Church from lay control, got his main support; the Normans of France, and their great Duke William, took the same side, and when William invaded England he came with a banner which the Pope had blessed, and with a commission to reform the lax and undisciplined English Church.

The religious revival, of which we have given a quite inadequate account in the last paragraph, was to bring about an acute controversy between Church and State in all the principal countries of Europe, which lasted, in one form or another, right through the Middle Ages. The Norman kings of England, though they were willing to reform the Church, were not willing to sacrifice their real power over it; and we shall hear something of their struggles in the next two chapters. But this was by no means the only, or the most important, aspect of the movement. It produced everywhere a quickening and revival of spiritual and intellectual life. New monastic orders were founded. Learning and letters began to thrive again. The brutality of the Dark Ages began to be qualified by the ideas of chivalry, which were essentially due to the teachings of the Church. In all this England, and still more the other realms of the

islands, had hitherto scarcely shared at all. But the Norman Conquest was to bring them under the influence of this great movement of ideas.

Thus the battle of Hastings, bitterly as it was felt by loyal Englishmen, was no unmixed disaster; both by bringing a firmer rule and a better organisation of the State, and also by bringing the beneficent influence of the great religious and intellectual revival which was at work on the Continent, it formed a vitally important stage in the development of the British peoples.

[Oman's *England before the Norman Conquest*; J. R. Green's *Conquest of England*; Freeman's *Norman Conquest*; Haskins' *The Normans in European History*; C. F. Keary's *Viking Age*. A good little book on a small scale is Mawer's *The Vikings* (Cambridge People's Books). For a selection of original materials, Wallis's *The Welding of the Race*. For contemporary Europe, Church's *Beginning of the Middle Ages*, Fletcher's *Making of Western Europe*, Tout's *The Empire and the Papacy*, and Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*.]

CHAPTER IV

THE WORK OF THE NORMAN KINGS

(A.D. 1066-1154)

William I., 1066 : William II., 1087 : Henry I., 1100 : Stephen, 1135.

§ 1. *The Norman Conquest and the Establishment of the Feudal Order.*

The Norman conquerors of England were descended from the Viking hosts who had settled early in the tenth century (913) in the region of France to which they gave the name of Normandy. In the century and a half since their settlement they had not only become Christians, but the most devoted sons of the Church. They had adopted the French language, and the civilisation of France. They had taken kindly to the new methods of fighting in mail armour and on horseback, and were already famous as the best fighting men in Europe. They had learnt to build massive castles, and in their devotion to their new religion they had developed a distinctive style of church architecture, of a very beautiful type. Vigorous, restless and adventurous, they spread their activities over a great part of Europe. During the eleventh century, even before their conquest of England, bands of them were carving out another new realm in Southern Italy and Sicily,[1] and ere long they were to take the leading part in the great adventure of the Crusade to rescue the holy places of Palestine (1095-9). As rulers and organisers they were yet more remarkable than as fighters and conquerors. Their French duchy was the strongest and best governed of all the great feudal principalities of France. Their Italian kingdom was to become famous in the next century as the model of good government for all Europe. It was a fortunate thing for the islands that this great people was moved, even though it was by mere greed, to take in hand the organisation of the divided island-peoples into strongly organised States. It was fortunate also that their leader,

[1] See map of Europe, 1100 A.D., where the Norman dominions are specially shown, Atlas, Plate 6.

William the Conqueror,[1] was perhaps the ablest and strongest man whom the Normans ever produced. A man of iron will, he was ruthless in crushing opposition, as was soon discovered not only by the English, but also by his own Norman followers and the miscellaneous adventurers who had flocked to his standard in the hope of plunder. He meant to be master in his own kingdom; and he meant it to be a prosperous and well-ordered realm.

The conquest of England was not completed by the single battle of Hastings, which gave to the Norman duke direct control only over the south-east. The Witan accepted him, indeed, as king, and he was crowned in London. But the great earls of the North and Midlands imagined that they would be allowed to enjoy pretty complete independence. They did not know their new master. In five years of hard fighting (1066-1071) William utterly subjugated one part of the country after another; and in Yorkshire, where the resistance was most troublesome, the whole countryside was devastated and depopulated. The conquests were secured by the erection of fortresses. At first most of these were of a simple type, mounds surrounded by ditches; but they were gradually replaced by massive, frowning castles, one or two of which (including the most famous of all, the Tower of London) were erected in William's reign, and others under his successors. Impregnable to anything short of a slow blockade, these castles made resistance or rebellion by the English impossible. The only place where the English held out long was among the marshes of Ely, under Hereward the Wake.[2]

As he conquered each region, William confiscated all the lands of English nobles who had borne arms against him, and distributed them among his followers, requiring each grantee to provide him with a fixed number of fully armed knights in mail. The few English nobles who were allowed to retain their lands had to yield them up and receive them back on similar conditions. Thus nearly all the land of England came to be held on strictly feudal tenure; scarcely anybody *owned* land, except the king; almost everybody *held* it on the condition of yielding stipulated services. All the king's tenants also were bound to attend his court if summoned, and to have their offences tried in it. The greater

[1] A life of William the Conqueror, by E. A. Freeman, is included in the Twelve English Statesmen Series. An excellent book, embodying recent knowledge, is Stenton's *William the Conqueror* in the Heroes of the Nations Series.

[2] See C. Kingsley's novel, *Hereward the Wake.*

'barons,' as the king's immediate tenants were called, soon began to let out part of their estates on similar conditions. Thus a baron who had to provide five knights or fully armed horsemen found it convenient, instead of maintaining them himself, to allot fixed holdings of land to each knight on condition that he presented himself when required. Such grants were called 'knights' fees.' The danger of this system was that the knights might think they only owed their obedience to their immediate lords, as was the practice in France. William guarded against this by making them all take a direct oath of allegiance to himself. (Oath of Salisbury, 1086.)

As for the mass of ordinary cultivators of the soil, the small freemen and the serfs, they were for the most part not much disturbed. But the Norman lawyers assumed that they were all the vassals of one lord or another, and subject to the jurisdiction of their lord's court so far as concerned their holdings; and thus the feudal idea was logically carried out in the lower grades as well as the higher. Everybody was the vassal of a lord, who was responsible for him. Everybody owed some sort of service to his superior in return for his land, work in the case of a serf, prayer in the case of a churchman, fighting in the case of a knight, and even in the case of a freeman, at least attendance at the court. And everybody was bound to attend his lord's court—the Court of the Manor if he was a serf, the King's Court or *Curia Regis* if he was a direct tenant of the king, owing military service. The King's Court, thus defined, took the place of the old English Witan, and the king used it not only for judicial business, but for consulting his greater barons, who alone generally attended. In that aspect it was often described as the *Magnum Concilium*, or Great Council of the barons; but it was essentially only the highest of the series of feudal courts, even though it exercised some supervision over the older shire and hundred courts. This was an orderly system, much better than the confusion that had existed before the Conquest.

§ 2. *The Beginnings of a National System of Government.*

But the Conqueror knew, from his own experience in France, that it was dangerous to let the great baron alone have control over his tenants; and if the king was to be the real master in his own kingdom, some safeguard against this danger had to be found. William found it in the relics

of the old English system, which had become much disorganised, but which he revived and strengthened.

Under the old English system every freeman had been liable to be called out by the king for military service. Such an arrangement might seem to be inconsistent with the feudal order, but William saw its value and kept it alive. Time and again he and his successors, when faced by a rebellion of their barons, called out the English *fyrd* or national levy of freemen, and the English, who knew that the mail-clad baron in his impregnable castle was their worst oppressor, never failed to help the king.

Again, under the old English system there had been shire courts and hundred courts for the trial of disputes between freemen, where the freemen themselves were supposed to attend and declare the customs under which a case should be tried. These courts had also been used for organising the people into groups who were mutually responsible for producing offenders, a system which the Normans greatly developed, under the name of 'frankpledge.' And by an old custom (no one knows exactly how old) certain very grave offences, such as murder, robbery and arson, were regarded as 'the king's pleas,' to be tried only by his officers and in his courts; and the shire courts had been used for the trial of these pleas. William and his successors (especially Henry I.) saw the value of these courts, and, though they had fallen into decay before the Conquest, they were revived and reorganised. The barons found that they were not allowed to try the offences of their tenants in their own courts, except when they referred to the land they held; really serious cases were kept for the shire courts. It was only in very rare cases that William allowed his barons to enjoy even what was called 'view of frankpledge,' that is, the right of organising and controlling their own tenants for police purposes. The king's agents had right of access to their estates and their courts to enforce this system.

The chief of these agents were the Sheriffs, or shire-reeves, one for each shire; and the sheriffs were, so to say, the men-of-all-work of the Norman government, and the means by which the king kept control over his subjects, in spite of all the power that the barons enjoyed. The Norman sheriff was indeed an extremely active and busy person. He collected the rents of the king's lands in his shire, and the dues owed by his vassals; he looked after the courts, and rendered account of the fees and fines collected in them;

he was responsible for the maintenance of order and the arrest of criminals, and he called out and led the national levy when necessary, and saw that it was properly equipped. If these courts and their sheriffs could be kept thoroughly efficient, the king would have comparatively little to fear from the most powerful of his barons.

But there was a danger that the sheriffs themselves might become independent, especially as they had to be important persons, usually barons holding property in the shires they governed. How were they to be kept under control? The machinery for this purpose was gradually worked out, especially under the Conqueror's sons and successors, the brutal and violent but masterful William Rufus (1087-1100), and the cool and clever Henry I. (1100-1135). Within the general body of the King's Court or *Curia Regis* there was developed a group of permanent and skilled officials, who travelled about with the king, and when he was away in Normandy managed the affairs of the kingdom for him. Most of them were churchmen—bishops or ordinary clerks (*clerici*). This little group, which included the great officials, the Justiciar, the Treasurer, and the Chancellor, tried cases affecting the king's interests, and also all sorts of cases that were specially brought before them by a royal *writ* or order. But they also kept a watch over the sheriffs. Twice a year, at Michaelmas and Easter, all the sheriffs had to appear before them, and render a full account of their government, and especially of the revenues of their shires; and wonderfully detailed records were kept by the king's clerks, some of which still survive. And presently, in the reign of Henry I., these active and able officials began occasionally to visit the shires themselves, sometimes taking a hand in the proceedings of the shire court. Thus the whole government of the country was brought under the control of the King's Court, much to the advantage of his subjects, in a way that had never been possible in the old English period.

There was another practice of the pre-conquest kings which also seemed to William I. worthy of imitation. In order to buy off the Danes, Ethelred the Redeless had levied heavy taxes on all landholders, called Danegeld—so much on every 'hide' (a hide was about 120 acres). The Conqueror saw no reason why, if the country could pay money to the Danes, it should not pay it to him. He therefore maintained this excellent custom, and he and his successors frequently levied Danegeld. But in order to

make sure that the full amount was paid, he had a minute and elaborate survey made of all land in the country, showing who owned it, what its value was, how it was stocked, and how many tenants of various sorts worked upon it. This wonderful survey, which still survives, is known as *Domesday Book*. It was completed in 1086. It gives us an amount of detailed information about the condition of England in this period such as does not exist for any other country. And it served many useful purposes. It must have been of the greatest service to the officials in checking the sheriffs and their accounts. Nothing gives a clearer idea of the businesslike and systematic way in which these Norman kings governed the country than a study of this wonderful record.

It may be imagined that such efficient and masterful control as the Norman kings exercised was far from popular among their barons. William and his sons had to deal with frequent revolts, some of them very formidable. They were all sternly suppressed, often with the aid of the levy of freemen.

One of the great difficulties of dealing with these rebellious barons was that most of them had lands both in Normandy and in England, and when they were defeated in one country they took refuge in the other. Under William II. and Henry I., however, the connexion between England and Normandy became much less close. Both of these kings were, in a sense, usurpers, having successively seized the English crown to the exclusion of their elder brother Robert, who kept the Norman duchy; and thus, at a very critical period, the kingdom and the duchy were separated for nearly twenty years, until Henry I. completed the injustice to his misused elder brother by invading and conquering Normandy (1106). The barons seized the excuse presented by the exclusion of Robert to revolt against both William and Henry. But these astute princes used the opportunity to confiscate the English estates of the rebels, granting them to new proprietors who did not possess land in Normandy. Even after the reconquest of Normandy Henry I. continued this policy.

No doubt this treatment of Robert was an injustice. But it was very advantageous to England. Robert was a first-class fighting man, and a lover of adventure, but he had none of the genius for government of his father and brothers. He was one of the principal leaders in the first and greatest of the Crusades (1095-99), in which religious

ardour sent vast numbers of the most gallant knights of Europe streaming over the Balkan Peninsula, across Asia Minor and down the coast of Syria, to rescue Jerusalem from the domination of the Moslems. The Normans of France and Italy played a highly important part in this gallant adventure, which was so successful that it established for a time a Christian kingdom in Palestine, and a string of feudal States along the Syrian coast. But William II. was much too shrewd to go a-roving for religious reasons; he was well content that his dangerous brother should fling off to the East, and take with him as many of the turbulent Norman and English barons as chose to follow him. England played, indeed, a less important part in the First Crusade than any other of the greater States of Western Europe; and perhaps its chief value to England was just that it freed her to some extent from baronial troubles, and gave time for the new Norman system of government to get fairly started.

One very important result of these events was that in the second generation after the Conquest the connexion of the English baronage with the Continent had been materially weakened; and this made it easier for them gradually to learn to think of themselves as Englishmen. There is a curious illustration of the rapidity with which this happened. In the first years after the Conquest lonely Normans caught by Englishmen in quiet corners were apt to disappear. To check this, the Conqueror enacted that when a dead body was found which could not be proved to be the body of an Englishman, the whole hundred should have to pay a fine, known as the *murdrum* fine. A century later this fine had come to be exacted for every dead body whose murderer could not be found; and the reason given is that it was no longer possible to distinguish between an Englishman and a Norman. That gives a very clear idea of the way in which the firm, harsh, efficient rule of the Norman hammered disorganised England into a single nation.

One other great service the Norman kings rendered to England; they reorganised the Church, and by doing so brought England into the full stream of the great intellectual and spiritual revival that was transforming Europe. The scholarly Archbishop Lanfranc, brought over from Normandy for the purpose, took the chief part in this work. Efficient Norman bishops were appointed, and brought the undisciplined and ignorant clergy into better order. Splendid

new churches and cathedrals began to be built. Monasteries were founded and richly endowed, and in the schools which they opened the youth of England began to be introduced to the best learning of the West.

One of the main features of this reform was the attempt to cut off the Church from the world; and as William the Conqueror was a reformer he instituted special courts to deal with the offences of the clergy and the spiritual offences of the laity. It was the aim of the great churchmen of this period to make the Church entirely independent of lay control; but the Norman kings, in spite of their zeal for reform, were not ready to permit this, since they drew their chief officials from among the bishops and clergy. So long as the Conqueror lived he exercised a very strict control over the clergy, not allowing them to hold councils or send any appeals to Rome without his consent. But after his death a quarrel broke out between the brutal William II. and the gentle and learned Archbishop Anselm.[1] Anselm had to flee for refuge to France, and when there he imbibed the current ideas as to the wickedness of allowing laymen to make ecclesiastical appointments or 'investitures.' When he was recalled by Henry I., therefore, a new dispute broke out over what is known as the Investiture question. It was the same question over which a violent controversy had been raging between the Pope and the Emperor for some thirty years. It had led to the deposition of popes by emperors, and of emperors by popes, and had torn all Europe asunder. But in England it caused comparatively little trouble. Henry I. and Anselm succeeded in arriving at a reasonable compromise in 1107, very much on the lines on which the European controversy was settled fifteen years later; and churchmen continued to be the right-hand men of the king in the development of an ordered system of government.

Thus in many ways the Norman kings had done splendid, if often harsh and cruel, work for the consolidation of the English realm. Unfortunately their work was not yet strongly enough established to be able to work smoothly under a weak ruler. When Henry I. died, in 1135, a dispute as to the succession to the crown broke out between his daughter Matilda and his nephew Stephen, and for nearly twenty years England was plunged into anarchy. Stephen

[1] There is an excellent and interesting *Life of St. Anselm*, by Dean Church; it gives a very clear account of the mediæval Church and its problems.

quarrelled with the great clerical officials, and the machinery of government broke down. The barons seized the opportunity to shake off royal control; they built innumerable castles within which they defied all authority; they inflicted upon their unhappy tenantry every kind of tyranny and oppression. The only interest of the period is that it showed the English what they had been saved from by the iron rule of their Norman kings, and made them realise more clearly than ever the value of a strong hand enforcing obedience to the law equally upon all men. Despotism was necessary, as a safeguard against utter anarchy; and there was no Englishman who did not welcome its restoration when Stephen died in 1154.

§ 3. *Norman Influence in Wales and Scotland.*

Such was the work which the Normans, with their genius for organisation, did in England. It remains to observe the extension of their influence to the other parts of Britain. Ireland they did not yet touch; that remained for the next age. But in Wales, which had never been conquered by the English, but retained its purely Celtic customs, the Norman kings encouraged some of their more enterprising barons to work off their zeal for fighting. Southern and Eastern Wales were gradually conquered, and secured by the building of numerous castles, many of which still survive.[1] These 'Marcher Lords' (*i.e.* lords of the marches or borderlands) were allowed to exercise a much higher degree of independence than the baronage in the rest of England, and they remained for nearly two centuries a very warlike and turbulent body of men.

In Scotland the Norman influence was more indirectly exercised. Since the conquest of Lothian by the Scots in 1018, the English region which that conquest included in the realm of Scotland had been exercising more and more influence, especially as the new capital of the kingdom was now fixed in that region, at Edinburgh; and Normans, as well as Englishmen, began to find their way into the kingdom and to play a part in its life; to introduce some of the institutions of the southern land, and in particular to reorganise the Celtic Church of Scotland on more strictly Roman lines. The change advanced most rapidly in the reign of David I. (1124-1153), which covered the later part

[1] There are more castles in South Wales than in any other part of the islands. See the map of Wales, Atlas, Plate 36 (*c*).

of the reign of Henry I. and the whole of the reign of Stephen. David had been educated in England, had married an English wife, and inherited through her an English earldom. He brought back to Scotland a great admiration for Norman methods of organisation in Church and State, and a whole train of Norman barons to whom he granted Scottish estates. He has been described as 'the maker of Scotland' because he gave to his country the beginning of efficient organisation along Norman lines. Celtic modes of land tenure, in the Lowlands at any rate, were changed into feudal modes. Tribal chiefs became earls, Norman barons settled themselves in various parts of the country. There was a *Curia Regis*, like that of the Norman kings in England; and there were sheriffs administering law in the king's name, and labouring to maintain his authority at the expense of the baronage. Even more important, the Church was reformed and reinvigorated, and many monasteries were built, the beautiful ruins of which at Holyrood, Melrose and elsewhere, are still the noblest ecclesiastical buildings which Scotland possesses. The wilder country of the Highlands was not affected by these changes. But the Lowlands were rapidly transformed; and by the middle of the twelfth century it is probable that the English language was spoken in most parts of Scotland south of the Forth, though, of course, the population, except in Lothian, remained almost purely Celtic in race. Thus the organising power of the Normans, which did its chief work in England, was beginning to produce an assimilation of the other parts of Great Britain.

[The best general accounts of the period will be found in H. W. C. Davis, *England under the Normans and Angevins*, and G. B. Adams, *England from the Norman Conquest to the death of John*. See also Haskins, *The Normans in European History*; and, for constitutional developments, Stubbs' *Constitutional History* and *Select Charters*. A selection of contemporary materials is given by Bland, *The Normans in England*. For the contemporary history of Europe, Fletcher, *The Making of Western Europe*, *1000-1190* A.D.; Tout, *The Empire and the Papacy*; for the Crusades, Archer and Kingsford's *Crusades* in the Story of the Nations Series, and the article 'Crusades' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.]

CHAPTER V

THE REIGN OF LAW ESTABLISHED

(A.D. 1154-1216)

Henry II., 1154: Richard I., 1189: John, 1199.

§ 1. *The Angevin Empire and Europe in the Twelfth Century.*

If the anarchy of Stephen had continued, all the work of the Normans would have been undone. Fortunately there came to the English throne, in 1154, a king who had all, and more than all, the Normans' power of government. There is no king in all English history to whom our people owe a greater debt than to Henry II.[1] He was the son of Matilda, who was the daughter of Henry I. and the rival of Stephen. As Henry I. had married an English princess, Henry II. had the blood of Alfred in his veins. Henry's father was Matilda's second husband, the powerful and warlike Count of Anjou; hence the dynasty which he founded is known as the Angevin dynasty. It also bears the name of Plantagenet, from the broom-sprig (*planta genista*) which Henry's father adopted as his emblem. These Angevin princes had been, generation after generation, fierce, overbearing and warlike men. All alike they were subject to bursts of almost maniac anger when opposed, so that men thought there was something diabolical about them; and to explain this there was a story that one of their ancestors had married a mysterious and weirdly beautiful woman, who vanished into thin air when they tried to make her go to church. 'From the devil we came, and to the devil we must go,' said Richard I. But ungovernable as their tempers were, they were very able men, and the ablest of them all was Henry II.

He was already a very powerful prince when he succeeded to the English throne; for, besides his father's principality of Anjou and Touraine, he had claimed and won Normandy, as heir of his mother, and his marriage with the proud and

[1] A life of Henry II., by Mrs. J. R. Green, is included in the Twelve English Statesmen Series. A more modern book is Salzmann's *Henry II.*

tempestuous Eleanor of Aquitaine brought him all the wide and rich lands of South-Western France from the Loire to the Pyrenees.[1] The addition of the English kingdom to these wide domains made him one of the two greatest powers of Western Europe; his only rival was the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, King of Germany, under whom the mediæval Empire reached perhaps its highest point of glory. The result was that the King of England began to play a very important part in European politics, and England was, more directly than before, brought into the full stream of European civilisation. And this was a point of high importance, because in the twelfth century European civilisation was becoming a great and noble thing.

The main source of the new life which was now pulsing through Europe was to be found in the Church, which was the chief, though not the only, guardian of all that makes civilisation most worth while. In the great struggle to secure independence from lay control, to which we have referred in the last chapter, the Church had won much; but it had not won a complete victory, and had many more struggles yet before it. One of the greatest of these, between the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III. (in alliance with the Italian cities), was about to begin when Henry II. ascended the English throne, and Henry's own conflict with Thomas Becket, to which we shall refer later, was a sort of echo of this greater struggle. But the Church had everywhere in Europe won a very high degree of freedom and power; and at the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, when Pope Innocent III. was laying down the law to the sovereigns of Europe, the Papacy reached the highest point of political authority which it ever attained. The Popes did not, perhaps, always use their power wisely; but upon the whole they did represent the conscience of Christendom, and the universal belief that there ought to be some power capable of forcing even the greatest sovereigns to respect the moral law by which all men ought to be bound.

Yet the influence of the Church did not depend mainly upon the Papacy, though without the support of papal authority, as things were, churchmen in all lands might not have enjoyed the same freedom and influence. It was the fact that the Church produced many great and holy men, and that its servants were the repositories and the promulgators of all the growing learning of the age, which

[1] See the map of Henry's empire, Atlas, Plate 35.

formed the chief source of its beneficent ascendency. The great monasteries were perhaps at their best during the early part of this period. St. Bernard of Clairvaux,[1] an abbot of the Cistercian Order, had been able, during the generation preceding Henry II.'s accession, to become a sort of moral dictator of Europe, by sheer force of eloquence and sincerity; and had sent forth the knights of France and Germany in the Second Crusade, to protect the holy places which had been won in the First Crusade, and were now threatened by the Turks. England took practically no part in the Second Crusade, because she was torn asunder by the wretched wars of Stephen. But England, like other countries, knew the zeal and ardour of the monks.[2] Cistercians, of St. Bernard's Order, were building many monasteries, especially in the wilder parts of the country, and were making the barren uplands of Yorkshire famous for the wool of the sheep which they bred. Some of the beautiful abbeys whose ruins we still go to admire owe their beginnings to this period; for it was an age of great architecture, of the type which we know as Early English, a very beautiful style.

One of the greatest services of the Church in the time of its ascendency was the stimulus which it gave to the foundation of universities, practically all of whose teachers and students were churchmen. At Paris the schools were already at work which were soon to develop into the mother-university of Western Europe; and students were flocking from all countries to study under their famous teachers—from England among the rest. The rudiments of universities were beginning to appear in England also. Some teaching had been going on at Oxford since Henry I.'s time; and Henry II.'s quarrels with the French king, which brought many English students back from Paris, strengthened these beginnings. The age which invented universities, as corporations for the maintenance and extension of learning, was certainly no barren age.

Moreover in these universities, but above all in the great Italian University of Bologna, men were beginning to study not only sacred learning, but also the science of law. They were eagerly studying the code of Justinian—the most complete treatment of the logical and lucid laws

[1] Cotter Morison's *Life of St. Bernard* not only gives a good account of this great man, but an admirable picture of the period.

[2] The first part of Carlyle's *Past and Present* gives an interesting account of the life and work of an abbot of this time, in a great Benedictine abbey.

of old Rome, which were known as the 'Civil' law; they were also working out in a clearer form a system of Church or 'Canon' law. And the influence of all these teachers was very great in helping the creation of orderly and just systems of law in the principal States of Western Europe.

Nor was it only in the universities that intellectual life was active. The knightly classes were beginning to rejoice in poetry and music, and a new literature of love and gallantry was arising in the native tongues of the singers; especially in France, where this was the age of the troubadours, and in Germany, where the minnesingers were busy. Henry II.'s knightly son, Richard, was himself a troubadour, and the friend of poets and minstrels. It was at this time that the competition of poets which forms the subject of *Tannhäuser* took place; and Frederick Barbarossa himself, the great Emperor, was surrounded by poets.

Lastly this was an age of remarkable commercial revival. The First Crusade had brought Europe into contact with the luxuries of the East, and Italian merchants were beginning to spread eastern goods over Europe, and to enrich their own cities. In the north the German traders of Lübeck and Cologne were equally busy, and the artisans of Flanders were building up the great industries which were to make Ghent and Ypres and Bruges rich and famous. In all this England had but a small part; her trade was mainly in foreign hands. But the foreign merchants were beginning to buy her wool, and to bring their wares to her principal fairs, like those of Winchester and Stourbridge.

It was a great thing for England that she should be brought into close contact with all this new life of Europe, as she was by being associated with the wide-spreading empire of Henry II., and with his far-reaching interests. English commerce was on a small scale. But the English trader could go freely over Henry's wide domains. He could observe how the more prosperous traders of Europe organised themselves. And as this was a time when traders and townsmen were everywhere striving to win liberties for themselves, there was much to be learnt in this field.

We cannot here pause to describe the politics of Europe in Henry II.'s time, or the part which he played in them. There were, in effect, four great secular powers in Europe,[1] along with a multitude of semi-independent feudal princes. Greatest of them all was the empire ruled by Frederick Barbarossa, whose reign ran parallel to Henry's (1152-1190).

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 6.

He was King of Germany, King of Burgundy (South-Eastern France) and King of Northern Italy, though he was never well obeyed in the last two realms. As Emperor he was in theory the successor of the Roman emperors, and it was his dream (encouraged by the students of Roman law) to restore the old supremacy of that power. He was never able to do so, because, even in his own realms, he came in conflict with the Pope and with the Italian cities, who were too strong for him. Nevertheless he was a very splendid and powerful prince, and a model of chivalry.

The second of the great powers of Western Europe was the empire of Henry II. The third was the Norman kingdom of Southern Italy (Naples) and Sicily; a small realm, but rich and prosperous, and famous as the best organised and governed country in Europe. It is not impossible that Henry II. learned some of his methods of government from this Norman realm. At the end of the century the Norman kingdom passed by marriage to Frederick Barbarossa's son, Henry VI., the Emperor who held Richard I. in captivity. This accession to the power of the Emperors filled the Pope with alarm; if Henry VI. had not died young, he and his successors might have dominated Europe, and made the dream of universal empire a reality. On his premature death there followed a final and most desperate struggle between the Empire and the Papacy, which ended in the ruin of the Empire and of the German kingdom.

The fourth of the more important powers of the West was France. But more than half of France was included in the dominions of Henry II., a vassal too powerful to dream of submitting to his nominal superior; all the west of modern Switzerland and the south-east of modern France—the Rhone country—were included in the kingdom of Burgundy, and subject to Frederick Barbarossa; and, in what remained, the great feudatories were so independent that the direct authority of the King of France was practically limited to a narrow strip north and south of Paris, the 'Ile de France.' If France was the most important part of Europe in this age, as she was, it was because she was the source of all the greatest movements of the age, not because of the power of her kings. Between the empire of Frederick Barbarossa on the one hand, and that of Henry II. on the other, she seemed to be crushed between the upper and the nether millstones. Yet the power of the French kings was soon to increase. The first builder of the

political greatness of France, King Philip Augustus, came to the throne in Henry II.'s time, and was the constant rival and adversary of Richard I. and John. And since the greatness of France could only be created by tearing from the kings of England their swollen French dominions, conflict between France and England was inevitable. The long series of Anglo-French wars with which the rest of mediæval history is filled, and the unhappy tradition that England and France must be eternal and natural enemies, were in no small degree due to the empire of Henry II.

Even the huge dominions which he possessed in 1154 did not satisfy the ambitions of Henry II. He led an army into the mountains of North Wales, and forced its princes to pay him homage; and Welsh archers continually fought in his armies. In 1174 he compelled William the Lion of Scotland to recognise him in the most formal way as his feudal superior; and he made this superiority mean something, as it had never done before. Above all, it was in Henry's reign that the men of England for the first time undertook the conquest of Ireland. In 1169 some half-Norman and half-Welsh barons from South Wales were brought over to take part in the feuds of the Irish tribal kingdoms. Next year a greater conqueror, Richard Clare, Earl of Pembroke, known as Strongbow, who was a leader of great skill and courage, crossed the Channel with licence from the king to carve out a dominion for himself. And in 1171 Henry himself passed over to Dublin with an army, took the homage of the Irish chieftains and the Norman adventurers, appointed a Justiciar to govern the island in his name, and assumed the title of Lord of Ireland, which his successors continued to bear until Henry VIII. exchanged it for that of King. The conquest of Ireland was not really effective. Norman barons, indeed, settled down in many parts of the country, and set up feudal principalities which waged frequent war with the Celtic clans; but they did not render much obedience to the English king. It was an unhappy thing that the conquest, once begun, was not as thoroughly completed as had been the Norman conquest of England, for this would have saved Ireland from many future woes. As it was, the country's disunion had only been increased; and the seeds had been sown of a racial hostility which was to have the most unhappy results. Nevertheless Henry II. did wield authority over Ireland in a different sense from any of his predecessors; and he may be said to have been the first king who reigned over all the islands. He thus

established a tradition and claim for the unity of the islands which was to have a lasting influence.

§ 2. *Henry II.'s Work of Organisation.*

But Henry II.'s greatest work lay, not in conquest, but in the strengthening of the government of England. The demands of his French dominions, which gave him far more trouble than his English lands, kept him for the most part abroad, and he spent only a small part of his reign in England. Yet in these few years he was able to achieve remarkable results; because he worked with a fierce and devouring energy that knew no weariness, and his active brain was always devising new expedients for strengthening his control. At first, no doubt, he thought of England chiefly as a source from which wealth could be drawn, to be spent in extending his power on the Continent. But he saw that the best way to make his kingdom profitable was to make it orderly and prosperous; and the further he went with this work, the more difficult and fascinating he found it. His ruling passion was the passion for good government, for its own sake, quite as much as because of the increased wealth and power it gave him. And gradually, by unwearied change and experiments, he worked out a system which rendered England the most justly governed country in Europe; a system, moreover, which was so well devised that it was capable of working by itself even when the firm hand of its maker was removed.

He began by crushing the feudal turbulence which had raged in Stephen's reign, and by rooting out the innumerable castles which had been nests of oppression. He restored Henry I.'s machinery of government, immensely increased its efficiency, and picked out and trained a body of such capable administrators that the machine ran with smoothness during the long absences of its master from the country. Like his predecessors, he had to deal with occasional revolts of his nobles, who disliked being kept in order. But he crushed them all, until at the end of his reign his own sons joined in a rebellion, and the great king's heart burst with anger and sorrow (1189).

Like the Norman kings, Henry II. saw in the old English institutions of the Shire Court and the *fyrd*, or national levy, the chief means of freeing the Crown from the danger of feudal independence; but he strengthened and developed these institutions so much that they became almost new things. Distrustful of the sheriffs, he on one

occasion dismissed every one of them, after holding an elaborate inquiry into their misdeeds. He started the practice of sending trusted officials of his court regularly on circuit to all the shire courts of the country, where they not only inspected the sheriffs, but took the trial of the most important cases into their own hands; thus, by the Assizes of Clarendon (1166) and Northampton (1176), he organised the system, which still continues, whereby the judges of the realm regularly go on circuit to bring the king's justice near to every man.

One result of this practice deserves to be noted. Until this time the law administered in the shire courts had been largely local customs, which varied a good deal from one district to another. Now, administered by trained lawyers, it began to be uniform; and the '*Common* Law' of England came into existence. It was not a written body of laws. It was based upon the ancient customs. But its growth and form were mainly due to the successive decisions of the trained judges who started in the reign of Henry II.

The king also made remarkable improvements in the procedure of the courts. The greatest of these was the use of the Jury system, which he borrowed from the Normans; but he developed it to such an extent, and used it for so many different purposes, that he may almost be described as its inventor. One of its most striking uses started in this way. Anxious to get rid of the disorderly persons who had thriven during the reign of Stephen, Henry decided in 1166 to have a catalogue of suspected persons made, from district to district. William the Conqueror had carried out his Domesday inquiry by calling together groups of freemen and questioning them about the holdings and the customs of their neighbourhoods. Henry determined to apply this idea to the new problem. He ordered the sheriffs to call together bodies of sworn men in the villages, the hundreds and the shires, and to bid them make lists of all persons reputed to be robbers or murderers in their district. The persons thus listed were then tried, according to custom, by ordeal; that is, they had to plunge their arms into boiling water or grasp red-hot iron, and if they healed within a certain time they were innocent, or they were thrown, bound, into pits of cold water, and if they did not float they were innocent. Otherwise they were guilty, and were punished in the appropriate way. But Henry felt that this was not a very satisfactory decision; and he provided that, even if acquitted by the ordeal, all the

notorious criminals whose names had been sent up by the juries should be banished from the country. This meant that in effect, though not in form, they had been tried and sentenced by the verdict of their neighbours; and it forms the real beginning of the jury system in criminal cases, though the system was to undergo a long process of development before it reached its modern form.

Having proved the value of the jury by this experiment, Henry proceeded to apply it for many other purposes. For example, cases affecting rights to or possession of land had hitherto been tried in the lords' courts, and, in the last resort, had been settled by fighting, under the name of Ordeal by Battle. This system was manifestly unsatisfactory. Under what were known as the Grand and Petty Assizes Henry devised various modes of having these questions settled by *juries* of neighbours acquainted with the facts. Again, every freeman was bound to be equipped for fighting in the *fyrd* with arms according to his wealth, and in the Assize of Arms Henry regulated the armour required from each class with great care. But who was to decide which individuals were liable under each class? If this was left to the sheriff, he might be bribed. Again the jury was used, and 'the neighbours' had to say what kind of armour each man could afford to provide himself with.

Now these developments of the jury were an immense safeguard of justice, and a very great improvement on the old methods. But what is even more important, they meant that the king was calling in the aid of ordinary people, knights or plain freemen, to help him in seeing that justice was done and the realm well governed. It is usual to say that the practice of self-government, which is the most characteristic of all English usages, took its origin in the folkmoots and shiremoots of the old English, where the freemen declared the custom. But, in fact, this had long ceased to mean very much; it would probably have died out soon in England, just as it altogether died out among the German peoples on the Continent of Europe. And it is much more true to say that the use of the jury system, which means the co-operation of ordinary men in the securing of justice, was the real beginning of self-government among us.

There is one other aspect of Henry's work which must be touched upon, because it brought upon him the most famous struggle of his reign: the conflict with the Church, as represented by the Archbishop Thomas Becket. As we

have seen, the Church claimed to exercise a quite independent jurisdiction over its clergy, and to be entirely free from State control. This often led to grave evils, for the Church courts could inflict no punishment more serious than the unfrocking of a cleric; and thus even a murderer, if he could claim to be in orders, might escape punishment. This offended Henry's sense of justice. William the Conqueror had allowed the Church to set up separate courts; but that might be held to refer only to ecclesiastical offences committed by the clergy, not to grave crimes. It was the opinion of the bishops and barons, whose advice Henry took, that by English custom clergymen might be tried in the king's courts for grave offences. Henry therefore decreed that all crimes committed by clergy should be punished by the king's courts, after the criminal had been tried and 'unfrocked' by the Church courts. Becket (who had earlier been the king's trusted friend and adviser) chose to regard this as an attack on the privileges of the Church, and a violent controversy broke out. Unhappily Becket was murdered in his own cathedral at Canterbury, by a group of knights who thought to do the king a service. They could not have done him a greater injury. Becket became a saint; Henry was made to appear the worst of criminals, and had to do penance before the murdered archbishop's tomb. The precious privilege had to be yielded to the Church, and clerks (which came to mean every one who could read Latin) enjoyed the right of being able to commit one murder with comparative impunity. 'Benefit of Clergy,' as this privilege was called, actually survived, in a very much modified form, into the nineteenth century; it could be claimed by the simple expedient of reciting a verse from a psalm in Latin. The verse came to be known as the 'neck-verse,' because it enabled a man to save his neck from the gallows.

Henry II. was a despot; that is to say, his sole will was law throughout his kingdom. He could appoint and dismiss his judges and ministers at his pleasure; he could raise almost what taxes he liked, as when, in 1189, he demanded a tenth of everybody's property to pay the cost of his proposed crusade; he could make what laws he liked, and there is no evidence that he had to consult even the Great Council of his barons in any but the most formal way, though he certainly liked to discuss big changes with his barons before they were carried out. He was absolute master of England, checked only by the danger of in-

surrection. But he was a despot who loved order, and made justice easier to obtain; his absolute authority was wielded according to fixed rules, which men could understand; his servants were competent and trained men, who had to do their work in accordance with these rules, and they established a tradition of LAW that was an invaluable boon. More than any other single man, Henry II., despot as he was, was the creator of the Reign of Law in England; and the Reign of Law is the only possible foundation upon which what we call political liberty can safely arise. It is not until men have learnt to obey and know the law as a matter of habit, that they can usefully begin to co-operate in making and controlling laws. And therefore the despotism of Henry II., like the despotism of the Normans who preceded him, was a necessary and invaluable stage in the education of the English people for self-government.

§ 3. *Richard I. and John; the Winning of Magna Carta.*

Henry II.'s son and successor, Richard I. (1189-1199), was, like all his family, an able man. He was a poet and a musician. But he had none of his father's statesmanship. He was, first and foremost, a superb fighting man, the strongest and most daring knight-errant of his age, and an excellent leader in war. His supreme delight was in battle; and this carried him away to Palestine, to do wonderful deeds of valour in the struggle with the Saracens for the Holy Sepulchre, which is known as the Third Crusade. To pay the expenses of this expedition, he used the vast power which he had inherited from his father to bleed England of money; and one important result of this was, that he sold to the King of Scotland the right of exemption from the feudal supremacy which Henry II. had imposed upon him. On his way home Richard was taken captive and held a prisoner by the Emperor Henry VI. of Germany, and in order to release their very expensive king the English had to be bled once more for a vast ransom. When he did at length return, it was only to spend his last years in hard and skilful warfare against the French king. Picturesque as they were, Richard's romantic adventures form no part of the history of the English people.[1]

But there were three ways in which Richard's short

[1] Scott's *Talisman* deals with Richard's crusade, and his *Ivanhoe* gives a lively though not very accurate impression of the state of England during this reign.

and costly reign was useful in the development of the English people. In the first place, their king's crusade, even though few of them took part in it, gave them some knowledge of remote countries, with which in the distant future they were to have more intimate contact. In the second place, the prolonged absences of the king showed how solidly and well the work of Henry II. had been done, for the government went on quite well, and there were even some improvements made; rebellions, even though led by the king's brother, John, were easily put down; and the huge sums required for the king's ransom were raised with surprising ease. Nothing could show more clearly how completely the government now controlled the country. Finally, during the king's absence, and because of it, the Great Council of barons took a larger share in discussing and criticising the government. Their share did not as yet amount to very much. But at least it was something that an organised and recognised body of leading men was asserting the right to criticise the powerful system of government which Henry II. had set up. And this was to have greater importance in the next reign.

John, the next king (1199-1216), had brains, like all the Angevins, but he was an utterly treacherous man, whose word could never be depended upon, and a mean, cruel and cowardly tyrant. He was the worst man who has ever sat upon the English throne; and this, strangely enough, was an extremely fortunate thing for England, for if John had been a really able and honourable man, it is probable that the efficient despotism developed by Henry II. would not have had to submit to limitations.

The early years of the new reign were occupied by two great controversies. One of these was a prolonged quarrel (1205-13) with the great and powerful Pope Innocent III. over the right claimed by the Pope to appoint a nominee of his own to the archbishopric of Canterbury. John resisted this claim, as his father or William the Conqueror would have resisted it. He brought upon his people (who were not to blame) the terrible punishment of an Interdict, whereby for seven years they were denied all the ministrations of the Church. But in the end he had to give way, as his father would never have done; and his submission went so far that he even recognised the Pope as his feudal superior, and undertook to pay him tribute for the kingdom of England. This admission was deeply resented by the English. Yet John's defeat by the Pope turned out to

be a good thing for England, for the Pope's nominee to the archbishopric was a fearless and patriotic Englishman, Stephen Langton, who later took the chief part in drawing up Magna Carta.

John's second controversy, which had begun before his quarrel with the Pope, was a dispute with his suzerain, Philip Augustus, King of France. He was condemned in the French king's court as a contumacious vassal; and he did not improve his case by subsequently murdering his nephew Arthur, who had a claim to inherit the French lands of Richard I. In 1202 Philip Augustus attacked and overran Normandy and all the northern French lands of Henry II. with great rapidity. John offered no resistance, being a coward; and the remarkable thing is that these territories, though they had been so long connected with the English Crown, accepted their change of masters with the greatest readiness, while the English barons showed no distress at the loss. Of all the French possessions of William the Conqueror, only the Channel Islands remained under the English Crown. The loss of Normandy (which a more vigorous or more popular king might have prevented) was an extremely fortunate thing for England. It left her more free to develop her own institutions and modes of life in her own way; for though parts of the southern French territories of Aquitaine, which had come to Henry II. with his wife, still remained in the possession of the English kings for more than two centuries to come, they were too far away to exercise the same kind of influence that had been exercised by Normandy.

It is a surprising thing that neither the quarrel with the Pope nor the loss of Normandy seriously weakened John's absolute control over England. The governmental system of Henry II. was too strong to be shaken even by such heavy blows. John was still the absolute master of England, and he used his power ruthlessly to bleed the country by excessive and oppressive taxation. The people and the barons groaned, but scarcely resisted; and the king strengthened his authority by maintaining bands of plundering mercenary troops. This went on until 1214.

During all these years John was planning vengeance against the French king, and the reconquest of Normandy. At length he succeeded in forming a coalition against France, which included the Emperor (now his nephew, Otto IV., who had been bred in the English court) and the powerful Count of Flanders. But the main attack of the

allies against France was completely defeated in 1214 at the battle of Bouvines, which is one of the most important battles in European history. If France had not won, Germany might have been saved from the confusion and disintegration into which she was rapidly falling; France herself, just rising from the long weakness of the early Middle Ages, would probably have been thrown back again. But, far more important for us, if John and his allies had won, he would almost certainly have returned to England with such increased strength and prestige that he would have been able to defy all opposition, and Magna Carta would never have been forced upon him. As it was, the French king at Bouvines (though he did not know it) was fighting the battle of English liberty as well as the battle of French unity.

For during John's absence on campaign the forces of discontent in England flared out. The dissatisfied barons, especially those of the north, held meetings, and decided that an end must be put to the bad king's oppressions, and that definite limits must be placed upon his power. Archbishop Langton suggested that they should make an old Charter of Liberties of Henry I. the basis of their claims, and upon this basis a draft of a great Charter was submitted to the king. He struggled in vain, trying to detach the Church from its alliance with the baronage. In the end he had to give way; and on the meadow of Runnymede, by the banks of the Thames, near Windsor, *Magna Carta* was granted (1215).

This famous Charter is regarded, not without justice, as the foundation of the liberties of England. Yet the student who reads it through will be struck by the fact that most of its sixty-two clauses deal with the rights of the barons, not with the rights of the people as a whole. And it is undeniable that the barons were chiefly concerned to secure their own position; they wanted to be safeguarded against paying excessive 'reliefs' when they succeeded to their estates, against abuses of the king's rights of guardianship over heirs under age, against excessive demands of service or money, and so forth. Yet even these concessions had a value; they meant that the king was no longer to be arbitrary master of his realm, but that, in some cases at any rate, there should be definite and recognised limitations to his power.

But the great feature of the Charter is its recognition throughout of the sovereignty of Law, and its demand that

even the king shall not have the right to break or evade the law. For the most part the system established by Henry II. was tacitly accepted by the Charter. Very little was said about the work of the shire courts and the juries and the sheriffs and the travelling justices; they went on as before. But they were to administer *the law*, not the arbitrary will of the king. The great expression of this idea is to be found in Clauses 39 and 40.

'39. No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned or dispossessed or outlawed or banished or in any way destroyed, nor will we go upon him, nor send upon him, except by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.'

'40. To no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or delay, right or justice.'

Now these clauses do not mean quite as much as appears at first sight. They only refer to freemen, and the majority of Englishmen at this date were serfs. The 'legal judgment' of a man's 'peers' does not necessarily mean trial by jury, though it came to be interpreted in that way: strictly speaking, it means trial by men of the same grade in the feudal hierarchy. And 'the law of the land' need not mean anything more than the custom of the district. Nevertheless these great clauses proclaimed the principle of the sovereignty of Law; they proclaimed that no free Englishman might be in any way hurt or punished by any person whatsoever, however powerful and important, unless he had first been tried and found guilty by the established courts of justice. The clauses, of course, were by no means perfectly obeyed; in the disorderly times that were still to come men's lives, liberties and property were often at the mercy of the strong. But when that happened, it was not only a defiance of justice, it was a breach of the established laws of England, capable of being punished if the courts and their officers were strong enough. And, as a matter of fact, this sort of oppression happened henceforward far less often in England than in other countries. As a result of these clauses, the practice grew up in course of time that, when a man was imprisoned without trial, he, or his friends, could apply for a *writ* ordering the sheriff or other officer to produce the prisoner in court and show cause why he was held in duress: this was the famous writ of *Habeas Corpus*, which has always been regarded as one of the greatest bulwarks of English liberty.

Magna Carta did not set up a system of self-government. It provided, indeed, that certain taxes called 'aids' (which

affected only the barons) should not be levied without the consent of the Great Council of barons; but it did not limit the king's power to exact money from the mass of his subjects, and even the modest provision about feudal aids was dropped in the first reissue of the Charter in 1216. It did not in any way provide that the people of England should be consulted as to the laws under which they were governed. All that was to be won later, by other means. But it did provide that the Law as such was to be supreme; and it made men feel that the laws were not merely the will of their master, to be obeyed merely because they must be obeyed, but that they were a protection of the rights of all, and therefore should be not only obeyed, but supported and defended, by all good men. In this way Magna Carta completed the work of Henry II., because it established the principle of the Reign of Law.

It was not in John's nature to abide by his word. No sooner had he granted the Charter than he obtained from the Pope a release from his oath, and, collecting his forces, began to re-establish his tyranny. He was still so powerful that the resisting barons found it necessary to offer the English crown to the son of the King of France, in order to get French help. Fortunately the bad king died before he had time to do much mischief. His son, who succeeded him as Henry III., was an innocent boy, whose guardians wisely and promptly announced in his name that they accepted the Great Charter with certain modifications. After this it was useless for the French prince to continue the struggle; and after being twice defeated, on land and at sea, he withdrew from England, and left the country to enter upon a new stage of its history.

[The books by H. W. C. Davis and G. B. Adams referred to for the last chapter cover this chapter also. Stubbs' *Early Plantagenets* (Epochs of Modern History) is an excellent short book on this period. For constitutional developments Stubbs' *Constitutional History* (with Petit-Dutaillis' notes) and *Select Charters*, and M'Kechnie's *Magna Carta*. Toyne's *The Angevins and the Charter* gives a short selection of contemporary materials. For contemporary European history, Tout's *The Empire and the Papacy*; Fletcher's *Making of Western Europe, 1000-1190*; Milman's *Latin Christianity*. For the Crusades, Archer and Kingsford's *Crusades* (Story of the Nations), and the article 'Crusades' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.]

CHAPTER VI

THE STATE OF ENGLAND IN 1215

We have now reached the end of the first stage in our long story. All the races which have contributed to form the Four Nations of the British Islands had by 1215 found their homes in the islands. Stone Men and Bronze Men, Gaels and Britons, Angles, Saxons, Frisians and Jutes, Norsemen, Danes and Normans, had been blended in various proportions in different parts of the islands; and from the blending had clearly emerged the Four Nations, English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh, which were to contribute to the building of the world-wide British Commonwealth. Only one of these four, the English, had yet been thoroughly welded into a nation, and that had been the work of the Norman and Angevin kings. The Scottish nation had reached its permanent national limits, but had not yet attained full unity; and the Irish and Welsh nations were still torn asunder by unceasing war among their feudal lords and tribal chieftains. But the main outlines were clearly drawn.

We may next turn to examine the mode of life which these peoples had attained at this date. We shall especially deal with the English nation, because its character and organisation had alone been definitely fixed; of the other nations we shall have more to say when they reach a corresponding stage of maturity.

§ 1. *A Land of Communities.*

The great mass of the English people drew their livelihood from the tillage of the ground, and for this purpose the land was divided, not (as to-day) into big farms, but into elaborately organised communities called *vills* or *manors*,[1] whose inhabitants, including men of many different grades, worked together co-operatively in the cultivation of the soil. The whole land of the vill or the manor was in most cases, and for many purposes, a single unit; and the

[1] A *vill* is a township, a *manor* is a separately organised estate. The two often coincided, but not always.

cultivated part of it was generally divided into two, three or more huge fields, which were used for different crops, or allowed to lie fallow, in a fixed rotation. Each landholder, great or small, from the lord of the manor down to the humblest serf, usually had a varying number of strips scattered all over these fields, though the lord of the manor often had his 'demesne' or home farm in a separate block. The whole working community of the village co-operated in ploughing and reaping the fields, each man taking the produce of his own strips; and in the same way, the meadowland on which hay was grown, and the outlying pasturage or waste land, were worked in common, each man being entitled to a share of the hay and of the pasturage proportionate to his holding.

Such a system needed very elaborate regulation, and there was room for much dispute about the rights and duties of individual villagers. It was also necessary to have a number of village officers, such as a reeve or foreman, a shepherd to tend the sheep of the whole community, or a hay-ward to look after the fences round the big fields; and these had to be elected. This common business of making regulations, settling disputes and choosing officers was managed at the manor court, which was presided over by the lord's bailiff, and all the villagers had to take part in it. By means of this court the lord of the manor made sure that his rights were enforced: that the *villeins* or serfs gave their due number of days to work on his land, that they sent their corn to be ground in his mill, and so forth. But although it was under the control of its lord, the manor or the vill was also in a real sense a *community*; and not only the free villagers, but the villeins and serfs who were tied to the soil, and who were in a certain sense the property of the lord, had a share in the community, though they were very defenceless against an unscrupulous or tyrannical lord.

The village community was almost entirely self-supporting. It grew its own food; its rough clothing was manufactured by the women, from the wool of its own sheep; its implements were made from the wood growing on the waste. Therefore it had but little contact with the outer world by way of trade. Still there were some things that must be bought from outside; in most villages salt, and iron, and fish (a necessity for fast days) had to be imported, as well as the modest luxuries of the more substantial freemen of the village or the lord of the manor; while the villagers

would sometimes have cattle or surplus corn to sell. To meet these needs, many little towns had grown up. Most of them were no more than rather larger villages, engaged in agricultural work during six days of the week, and only blossoming out into trade on the weekly market day, or the annual fair, when chapmen would come in from a distance, and booths would be opened on the green.

There were very few towns (and these mostly ports) which at this period amounted to more than this. Supreme among them all was London, which had always been an important trading centre, ever since the time of the Romans, and even earlier. This was because of its position. Traffic coming from the Continent across the Straits of Dover had to cross the Thames before it could reach the rest of the country, and London was the lowest point at which the river could be bridged, while it also formed an island of higher ground among the marshes which then fringed the river. For these reasons the Roman roads (which were still the principal means of communication) radiated from London. The river, moreover, gave safe harbourage for shipping, and London was far enough from the sea to be safe from piratical attacks : no hostile fleet has ever reached London since the time of the Danish invasions. Finally, the Thames, which is the largest stretch of navigable water in England, gave access to the richest part of the country. It is not surprising, therefore, that London should always have been the greatest trading centre in England, that the Conqueror should find it worth while to overawe it with his biggest fortress, the Tower, and that the court and government should tend to settle at this point ; for from London, more easily than from any other place, every part of England could be reached by road, river or sea. The Londoners, unlike the men of other towns, were numerous and rich enough to form an important political factor, often sufficient to turn the scale. They had won for themselves great privileges, including the right to elect the sheriffs of Middlesex, so that they were free from the constant meddling of royal officials. And they counted for so much that, as a community, they ranked with barons and bishops, and had a place to themselves in Magna Carta. But there was only one London ; there were, in this period, very few towns (such as Bristol, Norwich, and Southampton) which were what we should call towns at all ; the majority were of the type of ' villages with a market ' which we have described.

It was profitable to a lord to be able to turn one of his vills into even a very small town, because he got market dues, and could levy tolls from all who came to buy or sell; and it was therefore well worth while to offer special privileges to attract trading residents. And as nobody could offer such valuable privileges as the king, the great majority of towns grew up on the king's land. The special rights or privileges by means of which a village community was turned into a town were generally of the same kind. The first was the turning of the vill into a 'free borough.' This meant that the villagers were freed from the payment of all dues and services other than a fixed money rent. A borough was therefore always a place of freedom, and the custom was that if a serf could live in a borough for a year and a day he thereupon became free, he and his children after him. The next privilege was freedom from the payment of market-tolls in the borough itself, and, in some cases, in all markets throughout the country, or even throughout all the dominions of the king. When, by the grant of such privileges, a group of traders had been persuaded to settle in a town, they generally began to organise themselves into a *gild* or association for co-operation in trade; and the next stage in their development came when they obtained from the king (usually by a heavy payment) formal recognition for their gild and even the right to exclude rival traders from the market, or to make them pay for admission. When this privilege had been won, the gild (which commonly included at first all the burgesses) became a powerful self-governing body, and began to manage the affairs of the town. And soon it was ready to take the next step, which was to make a bargain with the king to pay him a lump sum annually in composition for all the profits he derived from the town. When that was achieved, the gild collected the rents and the market dues and the fees and fines in the court; the king, had, therefore, no longer any interest in maintaining his officials in the town, and it became a surprisingly free and self-governing body; though if it happened to be overshadowed by a royal castle, the constable of the castle might be troublesome; and the bishop in a cathedral town, or the abbot of a big monastery, or a baron who had acquired some town land, might sometimes interfere vexatiously. But in any case it is plain that a free borough with a gild, especially if it had a lease of the king's (or other lord's) rights, was a very free *community*, and a real community. Many such

boroughs were rising in England in the period after the Conquest; and Henry II. and his sons, especially, granted a large number of charters to particular towns which included all or most of the privileges described above.

The manors and the towns were not the only organised communities existing in England at this date, for the shire also was fast becoming a real *community*, thanks to the increasing amount of work which the Norman and Angevin kings were throwing upon it. The community of the shire found its expression in the shire court, and its head in the sheriff. To the shire court were supposed to come all the great barons of the shire, and all the lesser barons, knights and freemen, together with five representatives from each vill, and twelve from each borough. But the great magnates seldom troubled to attend, sending their stewards instead. The ordinary freemen also can seldom have been present, except when they were concerned in business before the court: you cannot imagine the freeman from the remotest corner of Yorkshire, for example, tramping through the mud to attend the monthly shire courts at York. In the main, it was the knights and lesser barons—whom we should to-day call the country gentry—who took a hand in shire court business, under the presidency of the sheriff. They arranged for the proper equipment, and (when necessary) the calling out, of the levy of the shire for war. They conducted the numerous 'jury' inquiries which Henry II.'s system required. More and more they began to feel themselves a *community*; and although the sheriff was the supreme responsible officer, the knights of the shire were tending to take a larger part in its business; and the king was glad that they should do so, as a check upon the sheriff. Already, under Richard I., they had been charged with the business of making the preliminary inquiries into 'pleas of the crown,' and a great deal more business was to follow. Soon the knights of the shire began to demand even that they should be allowed to elect the sheriff, though that was further than the king was ever willing to go.

Thus, encouraged by the Angevin and Norman systems, England was developing into *a land of communities*, all more or less concerned about common business—manor communities, borough communities, shire communities. And the king encouraged this development, because it was easier for him to deal with a comparatively small number of communities than with the mass of individuals. Already, at the end of John's reign, the idea had occurred both to the

king and to his opponents that it might be worth while to command all the shire communities to send two of their number who should be able to speak for them, and thus show what the judgment of the whole country was on the questions in dispute. Nothing much came of this idea in John's reign, and it is doubtful whether either of these congresses of representatives ever actually met. But the idea was to be greatly developed in the next period, and out of it was to come the beginning of the House of Commons, the name of which means not the House of the Common People but the House of Communes or Communities.

§ 2. *The Church and its Services to Civilisation.*

Distinct from all these communities of manor, borough and shire, and yet in a real sense including them all, was the great community of the Church, with its elaborate organisation of dioceses ruled by bishops and archdeacons, and of parishes with their parish priests, covering the whole area of the country, and its sub-communities of cathedral chapters and monasteries. To the Church the nation owed all the highest elements of civilisation that it possessed. The Church alone cultivated letters and learning, and provided instruction for those who desired it. The Church alone kept alive the memory of the past, by means of the chronicles which its diligent scribes compiled, and to which we owe most of our knowledge of the course of events. Without the aid of the trained and educated churchmen it would have been impossible for the Norman and Angevin kings to develop their efficient system of law and government. It was to the Church that England (and Europe) owed the wonderful development of the art of architecture which is the glory of this age, though it was to be surpassed by the still more beautiful work of the next period. And finally the Church had already, in a remarkable way, succeeded in exercising an ennobling and refining influence upon the brutality of the fighting knights. By giving a religious character to the young knight's initiation it had impressed upon him that he was devoted to a high calling, and that he was consecrated for the defence of the right and the protection of the weak. This was the idea of *chivalry*; and though few of those who swore its vows were able fully to observe them, yet their influence was real, and the sheer barbarity of the earlier ages began to be diminished.

The great community of the Church, in a narrow sense, included only ecclesiastics, and this view of it was too apt to be taken by the clergy themselves, who insisted (like Becket) upon special privileges and exemptions which were unfair to the rest of the nation. But in a wider sense the Church included the whole nation: it *was* the nation, regarded in a special aspect. And in a wider sense still, the nation found itself incorporated through the Church in a yet greater community, the whole world of Western Christendom, the *respublica Christiana* or Christian commonwealth, of which the spiritual head was the Pope. The unity of Western Christendom (which was the same thing as Western civilisation) was a very real thing in this age, and was felt to be a reality by every man. Wherever a man went, over all Western Europe, he could hear the same holy offices rendered in the same tongue in every village church. The English priest or monk was easily at home in every other land, because Latin, still a spoken language, was the universal speech of the learned. Moreover the Church was in a real sense a democratic community. The humblest lad might in its service rise to the highest offices. During the reigns of Stephen and Henry II. an Englishman of modest rank, Nicholas Breakspear, occupied the papal throne under the name of Adrian IV., and saw an emperor holding his stirrup, and kings venerating his decrees. A little earlier another Englishman, Stephen Harding, became abbot of the monastery of Citeaux in France, and was the real founder of the Cistercian Order of monks, the most famous and powerful religious organisation of this age.

In England, as in France and elsewhere, the life and work of the monasteries were at their best in the period with which we have been dealing. The monasteries were of different types, belonging to different 'Orders' and under different rules; and they varied very much in size and wealth. But in their broad features they all presented a marked resemblance. All of them were communities of men and women who had cut themselves off from the world, abandoning all their personal property and even their names, in order to live a religious life of labour and discipline and prayer. The houses in which they dwelt were all of much the same type: a series of buildings erected in a quadrangle.[1] On the north side was normally the chapel,

[1] See the plan of a typical monastery: Atlas, Introduction, p. 41. There are good descriptions of monastic life in Church's *Life of St. Anselm* and Morison's *Life of St. Bernard*.

often a very large and beautiful building, on which the monks lavished their wealth. For they spent a very large proportion of their time in the chapel, their day being broken up by a succession of services every few hours. At the opposite side of the quadrangle, as far removed from the chapel as possible, were the buildings in which the needs of the body were attended to—the refectory, where the monks ate their frugal meals together, and the kitchens. The chapter-house, where they had daily meetings for discipline and for the transaction of monastic business, was always on the east side of the quadrangle; the quarters of the lay brothers were on the west side, and other buildings, such as the library and the dormitories and the guest-house, found a place wherever might be most convenient. But the main centre of the monastery's life was the cloister, a covered and paved way which ran all round the inner side of the quadrangle and looked out through the tracery of unglazed Gothic windows, upon a grassy quiet square. Here, very often, the monastic school was held. Here the scribes indited their chronicles or transcribed holy books or classical works.

But the work of the monasteries was not wholly religious or intellectual. They devoted much of their income to feeding the poor. Their doors were always open to travellers, and most monasteries kept a large guest-house for the entertainment of their visitors; it was partly from these travellers, no doubt, that they learned the facts which they set down in their chronicles. Finally, in most of the Orders, and notably in the Cistercian Order, the monks devoted a great part of their time to actual bodily labour in the fields, and in this way rendered real services to the development of agriculture. The Cistercians, who loved to establish their houses in remote and lonely places, especially devoted themselves to the cultivation of sheep, and it was largely due to them that English wool obtained the high reputation which it acquired during this period; wool formed the basis of a lively commerce with Flanders, the great cloth-weaving district of the Middle Ages.

It was indirectly out of the educational work of the monasteries and the cathedral schools that the universities took their birth; both of the ancient English Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were working some time before the date of Magna Carta. Some important teaching was going on at Oxford as early as the reign of Stephen; but it was in the reign of Henry II. that it began to be a

really active seat of learning, as a result of a great migration of students from the famous schools of Paris (1167). Cambridge is said to have been established by a similar migration from Oxford in 1209.

§ 3. *Contact with Europe.*

Thanks to the Church, there was a good deal of coming and going between England and the Continent; and new ideas and intellectual movements had a chance to exercise their influence upon the islands in a way that had been impossible before the Norman Conquest. But this contact was still further developed by the growth of foreign trade. This, indeed, was still on a very modest scale; for, as we have seen, England needed little, and had little to give in exchange. But barons and knights, bishops and monasteries, wanted wine, which came mostly from France; and there was a certain demand among the well-to-do for silks and fine woven stuffs, jewels and goldsmiths' work, swords, armour and fine metal-work of various kinds, spices and rare foods. These commodities came partly from the towns of Flanders, which were becoming very busy and prosperous, partly from Italy, and (in a less degree) France; but many of them came from the far East, from India and China, by long and devious routes, which made them very expensive. Borne by caravans of camels, the Indian silks, muslins, spices and gems came through the Khyber Pass and across Central Asia, passing either north or south of the Caucasus Mountains, to the shores of the Black Sea; while other streams came down to the shores of Syria, or up the Red Sea to Egypt.[1] At all these points the goods were picked up by Italian merchants and by them distributed through Europe; and that is why the owners of shops which sell spices still sometimes call themselves 'Italian Merchants.' Some of the goods from the East also passed from the Black Sea up the rivers of Russia to the Baltic, where they were bought and distributed by the German merchants of Lübeck and Wisby and other Baltic towns, which later developed into the Hanseatic League.

But the English purchaser knew as yet nothing of the distant lands from which these rich commodities came, though the time was coming when they were to be ruled by his descendants. The English merchant scarcely came

[1] See the map of Western Asia in the Middle Ages, showing the trade routes, Atlas, Plate 59.

in contact even with the Italian traders. Such part of this stream of traffic as reached England was in fact mainly in the hands of German and Flemish merchants from Cologne and Bruges. They had organised a sort of co-operative factory or trading centre in London, which was known as the Steelyard, and by the end of our period they had established an almost complete monopoly over the foreign trade of England. So much was this the case, that they have given a word to our language in memory of their monopoly. When we speak of 'sterling' money, meaning money of full weight, we are using a corruption of the word 'Easterling'; sterling money means money of full weight, such as would be accepted by the Easterlings, or men from the East. So far, as yet, were the English from being a great trading or seafaring people.

In exchange for the wines and fine stuffs and spices which the Flemish and German merchants sold, the chief commodities which they bought in England were the products of the sheep—wool, sheepskins and leather. These were the only important exports of England. But English wool was beginning to be highly valued by the weavers of Ghent and Ypres, who were the great manufacturers of the period; and England was in that day what Australia is to-day, the great wool-growing country. Such were the humble beginnings of English foreign trade; and it was almost wholly under alien control. Naturally the English kings tried to make their profit out of this trade, and they were not sorry that it should be concentrated in the hands of the foreigners, because this made it easier to tax. They taxed the exported wool, they taxed also the imported luxuries, and they derived from these sources an important part of their revenue. Nobody controlled the amount of these exactions, except when they were a matter of bargaining between the king and the foreign traders. But the taxes came to be more or less defined by custom, and from that fact they derived their name of 'customs' duties.

§ 4. *The Backwardness of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.*

It is not necessary to say so much about the other three nations of the islands as we have said about England; partly because we do not know a great deal about them in this period, but mainly because they were all three in a much more backward state than England. England, as we have seen, was organised upon a feudal basis; but along-

side of the feudal order, and profoundly modifying it, was that remarkable series of organised communities in which the people were being trained to co-operate in the management of common affairs; and over all was the power of the Crown, so strong that it was generally able to maintain fairly good order, and to give justice to the people. In the greater part of Wales, Scotland and Ireland the outstanding feature of the people's life was the survival of a tribal system, wherein power rested with hereditary chieftains, constantly at war with one another. It is true that in all three countries the immigrant Normans had introduced some rudiments of a feudal order. But the feudal barons of the three minor nations were not worked as yet into a national system, as they were in England. With all its defects, a feudal order is better than a tribal system, because it does remind all its members, in all its grades, that they have a duty to the State as a whole, and it does provide some sort of means of enforcing these duties. In Wales, Scotland and Ireland, the feudal barons were as yet little more than additional elements of turbulence and confusion. In none of the three was there a central power capable of maintaining peace and order with a strong hand. There was no central power in Wales or Ireland at all, save the nominal supremacy of the English king; and therefore there did not exist in either country anything that can be called a national system of law and justice; law and justice were tribal affairs, not national affairs. Scotland was struggling towards a national system, under her national monarchy; but her institutions were still in a very rudimentary state, and her history is a story of unending turbulence, not only in the thirteenth century but for long afterwards. In 1215, the English were the only one of the four peoples of whom it could be said that they were organised as a nation, and had begun to act as a nation; and during the next period they were to become acutely conscious of their nationhood. The other three can as yet only be described as 'potential' nations. They were to begin to realise their nationhood more fully in the next age, in a series of struggles against England.

[Bateson, *Mediæval England; Social England* (vol. i.), preferably the illustrated edition; the Oxford Handbook of Mediæval History; Lipson's *English Economic History* (vol. i.); Ashley's *Economic History*; Gross's *Gild Merchant*; Milman's *Latin Christianity*; Gasquet's *English Monastic Life*.]

BOOK II

THE CONFLICTS OF THE FOUR NATIONS: AND THE GROWTH OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND (A.D. 1215–1485)

INTRODUCTION

Our First Book has recorded the making of four nations in the islands, out of the many races who have contributed to their population. It has dealt chiefly with the English nation, because this was by far the most highly developed of the four, and was to become either the mistress or the model of the other three. In England we have seen how the unity of the nation was finally welded by the firm rule of the Norman and Angevin kings; how these kings had established the Reign of Law among their subjects, and how, in the end, King John was compelled to accept definite limitations to the immense power which his predecessors had built up.

During the period covered by our Second Book, 1215-1485, these beginnings underwent a very great development, and the islands were brought to the condition in which they were to enter upon the period of British greatness, which forms the main theme of our story, and begins with the great discoveries at the end of the fifteenth century. It is very important that we should clearly understand to what state the Four Nations of the islands had been brought at the opening of the modern period, and therefore we shall study this second period rather more closely than the first.

In England perhaps the main features of the period were the formation and growth of Parliament, which acquired a considerable measure of power over the government of the country; and, alongside of this, the growth among the most important classes of the people of the habit of managing their own local affairs to an extent unknown in any other country in Europe. In this period also the mass of the English peasantry gradually ceased to be serfs, and became free men; and this happened in England earlier than in any other European country. Alongside of these great changes, the period also saw the rise among the English of a very strong feeling of national unity and patriotism, which finally obliterated the memory of old distinctions of race, and became the chief bond holding the State together; it was now no longer the bond of feudal allegiance to the

king as chief lord of the land which formed the real strength of the English realm, but loyalty to the king as head of the nation.

This feeling of national patriotism and national pride led the English to attempt to impose their rule upon their neighbours. They conquered Wales ; they tried vainly to conquer Scotland, but only succeeded in giving greater strength to the national sentiment of the Scots ; finally they tried to conquer France, taking advantage of her disunity, but after long and desolating wars, marked by some brilliant episodes, the English attacks in the end aroused to fever-heat the patriotism of the French also, and the last relics of the old French dominions of the English kings were torn away. So the English national spirit was left to find a new vent for its energy, and it was ready to take advantage of the great discoveries of the fifteenth century.

In Wales, during this period, there was a great revival of patriotic feeling, which even the English conquest was not able to subdue. Yet Wales gained a good deal from being brought under the English system of government.

In Scotland common resistance to the English attacks at last welded the various races into a single nation, different from the English in many ways, and yet not so different as to make their future co-operation impossible.

Only in unfortunate Ireland there was no improvement, but rather a falling back. Ireland was neither definitely conquered like Wales, nor definitely able to secure her own independence, like Scotland ; and this was to have many unhappy consequences in the Modern Age.

CHAPTER I

THE MEDIÆVAL WORLD AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE ISLANDS

It is impossible to study profitably the history of the British Islands, or of the world-wide Commonwealth which has grown out of them, without some knowledge of the course of events in Europe; because the British Islands and the British Commonwealth are only parts of the greater community of Western civilisation, and what has been thought and done by them has always been deeply influenced by what was being thought and done in Europe, more especially in France.

§ 1. *Changes in the Political Systems and Ideas of Europe.*

In the Middle Ages men felt deeply the importance and the value of the unity of Western civilisation, or (what was substantially the same thing) Western Christendom; and at no time was this unity a more real thing than at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the great Pope Innocent III., who compelled King John to obey his decrees and even to become his vassal, almost ruled Europe from Rome. All the rulers of Western Christendom equally accepted the Pope as the mouthpiece of the will of God; and the Church, which was in every country the advocate of justice and the nurse of learning, everywhere brought home to men the fact that they owed allegiance to the *respublica Christiana*, to the community of civilisation, as well as to their own nation and its king.

The unity of Western Christendom was in mediæval theory represented not only by the Church and the Papacy, but also by the Emperor, who was held to be the vicegerent of God in secular affairs, as the Pope was in spiritual. But in actual fact the power of the Emperor had never, since the days of Charlemagne, extended beyond the three kingdoms of Germany, Italy and Burgundy, and it had never exercised any influence over the affairs of the British Islands. In the first half of the thirteenth century

a very brilliant Emperor, Frederick II., known as the Wonder of the World, was striving to make his power effective in Italy. This attempt brought him into violent conflict with successive popes, and the intense struggle between the two supreme potentates of the world was followed with the keenest interest in England: the great English chronicler of the period, Matthew Paris, was as warmly interested in this struggle as in English affairs. As long as he lived, Frederick II. held his own, though his authority became very shadowy both in Germany and in Burgundy, whose feudal nobles rapidly turned themselves into independent princes; his power rested almost wholly upon the Norman realm of Naples and Sicily, which he had inherited. And after his (1250) death the imperial power almost wholly collapsed. It never again counted for very much in European history. The dream of its re-establishment as a real controlling force still survived, and influenced great thinkers like the poet Dante, whose treatise *de Monarchia* is a plea for the restoration of the Empire as the best hope of the establishment of peace and justice on the earth. For men felt, as men still feel, the need for some common authority to secure peace and justice for the world; and the ideal of the Holy Roman Empire was in a sense the ancestor of the ideal of a League of Nations. But every attempt to restore the Empire ended in failure: and thus one of the two great symbols of the unity of Christendom was more and more becoming a patent unreality during the three centuries which are covered by the present Book.

In the final struggle against Frederick II.'s successors, England was in a strange way involved. As the English kingdom had been brought by King John into a relation of special dependence upon the Papacy, the popes tried to use her strength against their enemies; and hence Richard of Cornwall, King Henry III.'s brother, was set up as a candidate for the imperial throne in Germany, where he wasted his substance in a futile endeavour to win support; while Edmund of Lancaster, the king's second son, was brought in as a candidate for the throne of Sicily. These events, as we shall see, had a considerable influence upon the course of events in England. They helped to produce a growing reaction against the Papacy, which was blamed for the burden and waste of these costly and futile adventures.

One result of the downfall of the Empire was that Germany,

which had been since the tenth century the most powerful of the European kingdoms, fell into a state of confusion, from which it never succeeded in escaping until the nineteenth century. It became a medley of little warring principalities, all striving to extend their dominions at the cost of their neighbours. During the confusion four things happened which are worthy of note.[1] The ambitious family of Habsburg established itself in the district of Austria, which was merely one of the frontier districts of South-Eastern Germany; and this family, which took its place among the chief ruling houses of divided Germany in the second half of the thirteenth century, was to play a very important part in the history of Europe for the next six hundred years. At the same time the Swiss mountaineers of the Forest Cantons established their independence,[2] largely in the course of a struggle against the Habsburgs: William Tell, the hero of Swiss independence, belongs to the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, and during the next two centuries the Swiss were gradually drawing neighbouring cantons into their confederacy, and holding their own against all attacks. Again, to protect themselves against the surrounding confusion, the trading towns of Germany, many of which made themselves practically independent States, were organising federations among themselves. The cities of North Germany constituted the famous Hanseatic League, of which Lübeck was the centre; and for a long time, especially during the fourteenth century, this League completely dominated the trade of Northern Europe. They maintained a great centre in London, and the bulk of English trade was in their hands. For, in spite of her political divisions, Germany was a prosperous country down to the time when the religious wars of the seventeenth century brought ruin upon her. Her vitality was shown by the vigour with which she was Germanising the Slavonic regions towards the East; and this eastward expansion forms the fourth significant feature of her history during this period. All along her eastern frontiers this pressure was going on. But it was most active on the shores of the Baltic,[3] where during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Teutonic Knights were conquering the heathen Slavonic tribes of Prussia, and forcing Christianity upon them; while, further north, the Knights of the Sword were imposing their sway upon what

[1] See Atlas, Plate 23 (*b*).
[2] See Atlas, Plate 21 (*a*).
[3] See Atlas, Plate 7.

later came to be known as the Baltic provinces—Kurland, Livonia and Esthonia. These adventurous crusading exploits attracted knights from all over Europe: the knight in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* had spent some time in fighting in Prussia. These events may not seem to have any very direct bearing upon the history of the British Commonwealth; but in the far future their results were to be important.

While Germany was thus falling into confusion, and at the same time engaging in many-sided enterprises, Italy[1] also was developing along its own lines. On the ruins of the Empire sprang up a large number of small city-republics or territorial princes, of whom (as a territorial sovereign) the Pope was one. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries some of these little States, notably Florence and Venice, were making very interesting experiments in government, which we cannot stop to examine. And, under the shelter of their freedom, a brilliant outburst of letters and learning and the fine arts was already beginning. At the end of the thirteenth century the greatest of all the Italian poets, the Florentine Dante, was writing his great epic *The Divine Comedy*, and in the next century he was to find a brilliant successor in Petrarch. Soon the glories of Italian painting were to be displayed. And at the same time the daring seamen of the great Italian ports, Venice, Genoa and Pisa were brilliantly developing their trade in the luxuries of the East, which the Crusades had begun. From among them came great explorers, notably Marco Polo in the fourteenth century; they were the forerunners of the wonderful explorers of the fifteenth century, many of whom were at first Italians. During all this period the city-states and little despotic principalities of Italy were the centres of a civilisation far more brilliant than was to be seen elsewhere in Europe, and their wealth and fame far outshone those of the greatest kingdoms of the more barbarous North.

During the twelfth century the leading position in Europe, which had hitherto belonged to Germany, passed definitely to France. From the time of the conquest of Normandy in 1204 her kings went on rapidly extending their power,[2] and reducing to dependence the great feudal vassals who had hitherto been able to disregard them. The thirteenth century was distinguished by the noblest of French kings,

[1] See Atlas, Plate 17 (*b*).

[2] See Atlas, Plate 15 (*a*).

Louis IX., known as St. Louis.[1] He was the very model of mediæval kingship: a valiant crusader and a knight without fear or reproach, a devout and cheerful Christian, a firm ruler, and a man utterly faithful to his word, he won the respect of all Europe, and was often referred to as an arbiter, as by the English king and barons in the Mise of Amiens in 1264. After him came a great lawyer-king, Philip the Fair, the contemporary of the English Edward I., whom in many ways he resembled; and the legal organisation of the despotic French monarchy was perfected. But France was not yet welded together by the sentiment of nationality; and so, in spite of the formidable power of her kings, her unity was in danger of breaking up under the strain of internal dissensions and feudal ambitions, which gave to the English kings the opportunity of making fresh, though evanescent, conquests in France. Not until the English had been driven out by the outburst of national patriotism which centred in Joan of Arc was the greatness of France to reach its full stature.

The gradual growth of national feeling in large and unified States, is, indeed, one of the main features of this great period. The national State, held together by the patriotism of its citizens, was in fact a new thing in the history of the world. It had never existed before this time, and it was only slowly and unconsciously created. England was the first of the nation-states to become fully conscious of her nationhood, and we shall see in the following chapters what great steps she was taking in this direction. France was following more slowly along the same path. During this period also the little Christian kingdoms of Spain—Castile, Aragon, and Portugal—were getting the upper hand of the Moors,[2] and were in the conflict acquiring a strong sentiment of patriotism which was to enable them to play a great part in the later history of Europe. Before the end of the thirteenth century the Moors had been penned into a narrow strip of territory in the extreme south, and the Christian kingdoms, now masters of almost the whole peninsula, were able to play a considerable part in the life of Europe as a whole.

Outside of Europe tremendous events were taking place. The wonderful Mongol conqueror, Genghiz Khan, succeeded during the first part of the thirteenth century in making himself master of China and of the whole of Asia north of

[1] There is an English translation of Joinville's charming *Vie de St. Louis*.
[2] See the maps, Atlas, Plate 18 (*c*) and (*d*).

the Himalayas ;[1] his armies pressed into Europe, reduced the disorganised and backward peoples of Russia to a subjection which lasted for two centuries, and caused for a time great alarm to the peoples of Western Europe. And although this peril came to nothing, being stemmed mainly by the valour of the Poles, it aroused for the first time in Europe a keen interest in Asia and its affairs. Two courageous friars were sent out, the one (named Rubruquis) by St. Louis of France, the other (Carpini) by the Pope, to make their way to the court of Genghiz Khan; and the reports which they brought back gave to Europe its first ideas about the East. In the fourteenth century a greater traveller still, Marco Polo, was to carry out a wonderful journey of exploration, right across Asia, through China, and back round India to Europe.[2] The Crusades had begun the breaking down of European isolation ; but these journeys carried the process much further. And while the Mongols of Central Asia were building up their loose and ill-compacted empire, another branch of the same stock, the Ottoman Turks, were establishing themselves first in Asia Minor, and then, during the fourteenth century, in the Balkan Peninsula.[3] We shall see more of their achievements later. In the meanwhile their aggressive activity was making it certain that Europe would soon have to turn its thoughts eastwards again, as in the days of the Crusades : a new phase in the conflict between East and West, between Christendom and Islam, was looming ahead.

It is one of the most surprising features of the fourteenth century that Europe should have paid so little attention to the aggressive activity of the Turks, and made so little attempt to resist it. The main reason for this was that, with the growth of national feeling and of the intense local patriotism of city-states in Italy and Germany, the feeling of the unity of Christendom and of its common interests was gradually becoming weaker. Already, as we have seen, the Empire, which had been one of the symbols of this unity, had become manifestly impotent. Its decline was soon followed by that of its great rival and partner, the Papacy, which, though it retained its almost unchallenged spiritual leadership, more and more tended to lose its political influence in Europe. During the thirteenth century the exactions which it made in carrying on its struggle

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plates 59, 60.
[2] His route is shown in the Atlas, Plates 59, 60.
[3] See the map, Atlas, Plate 25 (*b*).

against the Empire produced a great deal of discontent in all countries: we shall see in the next chapter how active it was in England. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the popes fell under the influence of the French monarchy, and removed their seat of government from Rome to Avignon, on the borders of the French king's lands. It remained there for seventy years, a period which is known as the Babylonish Captivity; and during all this time the popes were French, and followed a policy which was influenced very deeply by France. This led to a great reaction against papal claims, especially in England, which was engaged in the long war with France, but also in other countries. Not only was papal authority resented, but a remarkable revolt against some of the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church began, and rose to a great height, especially in England and in Bohemia. And this was increased when (as we shall see later) the Babylonish Captivity was succeeded by a papal schism, when rival popes anathematised one another. Everywhere the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were marked by a growing freedom of thought, a growing challenge to the received doctrines of the Middle Age, both in religion and in politics; and this meant that the strong sense of the unity of Christendom which had earlier meant so much was steadily becoming weaker.

§ 2. *The Enrichment of Civilisation: the Friars and the Universities.*

But though the political influence of the Church was declining, the work of civilisation which it had fostered was going on more vigorously than ever. It was still maintained chiefly by institutions which the Church had created; but these tended, as time went on, to become more independent and more national in character, and they were supplemented by institutions and movements with which the Church had little or nothing to do.

Perhaps the most notable work of the thirteenth century was that which was done by the great orders of Mendicant Friars, the Franciscans and Dominicans. These were orders, semi-monastic in character, which at first showed some signs of revolt against the orthodox system of the Church; but the Papacy was wise enough to recognise them, and to make use of their zeal. This is not the place in which to tell the story of St. Francis of Assisi,[1] one of the

[1] The best life, by Sabatier, is translated into English.

most lovable and beautiful characters whom the human race has ever produced, or of the stern and ascetic Spaniard, St. Dominic. But these two leaders started a movement of the greatest value and power.

The older orders of monks had dwelt apart from the world, cultivating their own souls; and, although they had rendered many services to their fellow-men, the service of their fellows was not their primary aim. But St. Francis and St. Dominic invited their followers to 'take poverty as their bride,' to give up all worldly possessions and live by begging, in order that they might devote themselves wholly to the service of the poor and needy, and to the preaching of truth. Thousands of devoted men answered the call, and in a very few years they were spread all over Europe, preaching and teaching and tending the poor and sick. They came to England first between 1221 and 1224, and were eagerly welcomed, especially in the squalid and insanitary little towns, which the monks had generally neglected, and which were badly served even by the ordinary priesthood. The friars were, in their best days, very democratic communities. At first they would have nothing to do with learning or with fine buildings. But they soon found that if they wanted to influence men's minds they must pay attention to these things, and especially try to work upon the swarms of poor students who were haunting the universities of Europe, and producing a general ferment of ideas. So they started houses and gave teaching in university towns: and many of the greatest scholars of this and the following age were drawn from among them. In this field many of the friars continued to do good work. But their original ardour soon died down among the majority. The begging friar became something of a nuisance, and his laziness and greed contributed to the reaction against the Church in the fourteenth century and later. The noblest movements are apt to outlive their usefulness, when their zeal develops into formalism: an ideal creates an institution, and then the institution suffocates the ideal. But nothing could destroy the stimulus which the friars had given to the thoughts and hopes of poor and neglected men.

We have referred to the universities. All through this period their activity was among the most powerful forces shaping the thought and life of Western civilisation; and though they sprang from the Church, and continued to be almost wholly ecclesiastical institutions, the ferment of thought which they were producing was among the most

potent forces making for a new order of things in which the dominance of the Church would be greatly reduced. The great preachers of new ideas in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Wycliffe and Huss, Marsilius of Padua and Gerson of Paris, all came from the universities. The universities had started in the twelfth century, but it was in the thirteenth that the power of knowledge, which they represented, began to make itself felt all over Europe, and that the fame of great teachers drew throngs of students together from every land. On every road that led towards the university towns (which were steadily becoming more numerous) the wandering students, mostly poor men, became a familiar sight: squabbling and roistering, often drunken and disorderly, and very difficult to keep in order, they formed as distinctive a feature of the life of the road as the mendicant friars. We still preserve and sometimes sing the half-rollicking, half-melancholy songs which they sang in taverns after great battles with the townsfolk, or under hedgerows by the roadside—songs like the famous *Gaudeamus igitur juvenes dum sumus*. But, reckless vagabonds as many of them were, they loved learning, and pursued eagerly any teacher who could give it them.

The most famous of the European universities were Paris, the great centre for theology and philosophy, whose scholars wielded an authority scarcely less than that of the popes themselves, and Bologna, where the best teaching was given in law, and whence was drawn much of the inspiration and guidance that produced the remarkable law-making activity of this age. But Oxford formed a good third to this famous pair; and in the thirteenth century some of the greatest of Englishmen were teaching in Oxford, such as the noble and saintly Edmund Rich, who afterwards became Archbishop of Canterbury, or Robert Grosseteste, afterwards the wise Bishop of Lincoln, or, above all, Roger Bacon (1214-1295), perhaps the deepest thinker of the mediæval period. Bacon spent his life in Oxford, much of it as a Franciscan friar. He is said to have discovered gunpowder and the telescope and the burning-glass; whether these claims are true or not, his books showed a deeper sense of the value of knowledge and the best ways of extending it than was to be shown by any other thinker for centuries to come. He was one of the greatest of Englishmen, and deserves to be better remembered.

Another great Englishman of this period was the historian

Matthew Paris, who was during the first half of the thirteenth century busy in the monastery of St. Albans writing the most vivid, many-sided and impartial historical narrative that had yet been produced in Europe. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of his work is the strong sentiment of English patriotism which pervades it. Earlier monastic chroniclers had always written as loyal churchmen first, to whom the interests of the Church ranked before everything, and as Englishmen only second, if even that. But when Matthew Paris thought the Pope was in the wrong, or was levying unduly oppressive exactions, he did not hesitate to say so; and, although he was a friend of King Henry III., he was equally fearless in condemning him when he thought he was ruling badly and invading the liberties of Englishmen. This national spirit is a new and striking thing, and it forms a remarkable illustration of the new temper which we shall see at work in England.

Even in the thirteenth century there were some beginnings of intellectual activity independent of the Church and the universities in England, though on nothing like the same scale as in Italy. In the fourteenth century this independent life was to come fully alive with the first great efflorescence of a vernacular literature in the time of Chaucer. That was itself a product of the stir of national feeling which is one of the strongest notes of this age. We shall have to deal with it more fully later. National thought and its expression were thus gradually emancipating themselves from the control of the Church.

A similar movement is to be seen, though less markedly, in the sphere of architecture. All the best work of the thirteenth century was still inspired by the Church, and this was the greatest age of Gothic architecture. Very beautiful churches and abbeys had been built in the twelfth century; but the work of the thirteenth, in France above all, but also in England and elsewhere, was yet more wonderful, and the carving of tombs and statuary, and even of gargoyles, surpassed everything that had yet been achieved. The noblest cathedrals and churches of France and of England belong to this age—notably the greater part of Westminster Abbey, which was rebuilt by King Henry III. in place of the old one of Edward the Confessor. In the next century architectural work became more grandiose but less noble; and it is noteworthy that some of the best work began to be given to secular buildings.

The centuries which we have to cover in rapid review

in this Book were full of strife, and the ordinary narrative of their events seems to be, like the story of most centuries, a mere record of unceasing turbulence, war and treachery. It is well to remember that alongside of the tumults and intrigues of kings and barons, to which we must turn, the Franciscans were labouring in the slums of the towns, Roger Bacon was studying and teaching at Oxford, scholars in their hundreds were tramping the roads in search of learning, and the builders and sculptors were at their wonderful work all over Western Europe.

And even the disputes of kings and barons were producing great results. Out of their debates were arising, in all the lands of the West, the rudiments of national representative assemblies. The courts of feudal kings, which their chief tenants were bound to attend, were being used as a means of ensuring that the conditions of the feudal contract were not interpreted to these tenants' disadvantage; and, though this was no new thing, it was becoming more important now that kings were making their power more effective. The minor feudal tenants, who had hitherto not troubled to attend, were beginning to take part in these discussions through representatives. And in addition to these purely feudal elements, the two elements in a mediæval State which were in some degree non-feudal—the Church and the semi-autonomous merchants of the towns—were also, in many countries, being worked into the system, and invited to take part in some of the more important deliberations upon national affairs. Thus there were being formed assemblies of the 'Estates of the Realm'—the great orders or social grades into which every Western people was divided. This development was taking place in every country in Europe, almost simultaneously, though with differences of form. Its importance was that it made possible the gradual growth of a system of national co-operation in some of the functions of government.

The rise of a system of representation of various social grades or groups, out of which a parliamentary system could grow, was in no sense peculiar to England; it was a common feature of the life of all parts of Europe in this fruitful and active age. But it is significant that the term 'Estates,' commonly employed in Scotland and on the Continent, was never used in England. This difference in terminology represents a real difference in fact. From the first the assemblies which the king was beginning to call into counsel in England were not strictly 'Estates,' or clearly

defined social orders. And this difference was to have important results. England, in the long run, was to be the only country in which these promising beginnings were to lead to the creation of a real parliamentary system, representative not merely of privileged classes, but of the whole community. The reasons for this peculiarly English development can only be understood by following the course of events which gave rise to it. Hence even the story of royal and baronial quarrels, to which we must next turn, has in it an element of nobility; since out of these quarrels there was to arise something as noble and enduring as even the work of the cathedral builders—the system of parliamentary government, which has been the greatest contribution of the English people to the common stock of civilisation.

[For European history during this period see Tout, *The Empire and the Papacy*, and Lodge, *The Later Middle Ages*; Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*; Milman's *Latin Christianity*; Jessopp, *The Coming of the Friars*. On the universities the standard book is Rashdall, *The Universities in the Middle Ages*.]

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANISATION OF THE ENGLISH NATION

(A.D. 1216-1307)

Henry III., 1216: Edward I., 1272.

§ 1. *The Rise of National Feeling.*

ALTHOUGH Magna Carta had laid it down that the king must rule in accordance with the law, it had not (in the form in which it was revised in 1216 and 1217) given any definite power to the Great Council of the barons, still less to the people as a whole. The king was still master of the realm. But fortunately John's son, King Henry III., was a minor when he succeeded to the throne; and during the years of his minority the Great Council of barons had to be frequently consulted, and got into the habit of taking an important share in the management of public affairs. They even appointed the Regent or the Justiciar who wielded the royal power. And they set alongside of him a small council, whose advice he had to consider; this was the origin of the Privy Council, and from this time onwards it was always held that the king ought to abide by the advice of his councillors. Of course, when the king came of age, he chose his own councillors; but the barons showed an inclination to think that they ought to be consulted in the selection of them.

The real rulers of the country in this first period were successively two patriotic English barons, William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, and Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, who were greatly helped by the wise Archbishop Stephen Langton. They were both strong men, and de Burgh showed great vigour in crushing the bands of foreign mercenaries whom John had hired, and who showed themselves exceedingly unruly after his death. But the Justiciar and the barons were not the only controlling powers. Since King John had become a vassal of the Pope, the Pope claimed to supervise the government of England, and for a number of years his legates, Gualo and Pandulf, successively played a large part in the government. On the whole they

used their influence wisely; but the growing national spirit of the English resented their presence, and still more the very large demands in money which the popes now began to make on England, as a tributary kingdom.

In 1232 King Henry III. dismissed and imprisoned Hubert de Burgh, and began to rule on his own account. For a number of years no Justiciar, or chief minister, was appointed, and there was no properly organised royal Council. Henry III. was not a bad man, but he was frivolous, infirm of purpose and incompetent, and government soon began to fall into confusion. Three things especially led to a great deal of grumbling, both among the barons and among ordinary people.

In the first place, Henry welcomed to his court a large number of foreigners of high birth, relatives of his wife and of his mother. Large estates and the highest offices in Church and State were bestowed upon these strangers; the archbishopric of Canterbury itself was given to a turbulent young noble, Boniface of Savoy, who formed a very poor contrast to his predecessor, the saintly Edmund Rich. The favours shown to these foreigners intensified the growing national spirit of England.

In the second place, Henry was eager to regain the lands which his father had lost in France, or at least to consolidate the southern territories in Aquitaine which John had retained, but which were gradually being nibbled away by the French kings. If he had been successful in these ambitions, no doubt there would have been little complaint, though Englishmen were beginning to think that there was no reason why their lives and money should be spent on the king's French lands. But Henry's attempts were badly mismanaged, and led only to humiliation. He lost the whole of Poitou in 1242-3, and soon the French possessions were limited to Gascony and the neighbouring districts.[1] Even these were in a state of disorder; they were only preserved by the energy and vigour of the king's brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, who was Governor of Gascony from 1248 to 1253. But Montfort had to complain bitterly of lack of support, and of the way in which his influence was undermined by the king. All this, added to the money lavished on foreigners, involved high expenditure and burdensome taxation.

Lastly, the deepest dissatisfaction was caused by the king's relations with the Pope. Pope and king formed a

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 36 (*a*).

close alliance, whereby the Pope gave full support to the king, and in return was allowed to levy immense taxes on the English Church, and to fill English benefices with foreign clerics. So great was the resentment against this, that a secret society was formed by a body of English knights to resist by force this plundering of the country, and to prevent the payment of tithe and other dues to the Pope's nominees and agents. But the culmination came when Henry was persuaded by the Pope to engage in futile and wasteful foreign enterprises. The Pope was striving to destroy the last relics of the power of the house of Hohenstauffen, to which the Emperor Frederick II. had belonged, and which had ruled both in Germany and in Southern Italy. With the Pope's encouragement, Henry III.'s brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, was elected as Emperor in Germany. He never had a chance of becoming real master in that divided country, because he had no lands of his own there ; and all that his candidature meant was that English money, exacted from Richard's tenants, was wasted in attempts to buy the support of faithless German nobles. Worse still, in 1254 Henry accepted, on behalf of his second son Edmund, a papal nomination to the throne of Sicily, though Sicily was entirely in the possession of the Pope's enemies. The king undertook to meet all the expenses of the war, to send an army at once, and to pay an annual tribute. As the king was already nearly bankrupt, this undertaking could never be carried out, and Edmund never reigned in Sicily. But a new horde of papal emissaries arrived to exact still further money from the English Church, and the churchmen were soon as ready to revolt as the barons and the hard-pressed taxpayers. In addition to all this, the Prince of North Wales was using the opportunity of the king's weakness to extend his power, and was overrunning and conquering the lands of the ' Marcher ' lords.

§ 2. *Montfort and the First Attempt at Parliamentary Government.*

Thus the result of Henry III.'s personal government, 1232-1258, was that the whole nation was eager to see an end of plundering foreigners, and of reckless foreign adventures, and of papal exactions. The barons had made up their minds that the king must be brought under control. And they found a leader in Simon de Montfort,[1] who had

[1] There is a life of Simon de Montfort by G. W. Prothero.

come home full of rage from his government in Gascony. Yet Simon was himself a foreigner, being the son of the fierce French noble of the same name who had carried out a ruthless crusade against the Albigensian heretics in Southern France. When he had first come to England to claim the Earldom of Leicester by right of his mother, and had married the king's sister, he had been regarded as just another of the devouring foreign locusts. Now he appeared as the leader of the patriotic party, and it is very hard to determine whether he was a genuine reformer, or merely an able man greedy for personal power. Popular opinion gave its judgment in his favour; he was revered as a martyr to liberty after his death, and has always been regarded as one of the great builders of the English constitution. But popular opinion is not always right, and we shall see that there is some ground for doubt.

The baronial opposition took shape at a council of the barons, which the king was compelled to summon at Oxford in 1258. It is known as the 'Mad Parliament,' but it was only an assembly of barons and great churchmen, and included no popular elements: the word 'Parliament,' which means simply a 'talking' or conference, had for some time been applied to these meetings. To this 'talking' nearly all the barons came in armour and with bands of retainers, and the king had no alternative but to give way to their demands, which are known as the Provisions of Oxford. They set up a committee of twenty-four to revise the whole government and its policy, and practically, for the time being, to take over the power of the king. They also decided that the king should have a standing council of fifteen, whose advice he should be bound to follow; and that three times a year there should be a 'Parliament' or conference between the fifteen and twelve of the barons.

In effect this scheme meant that the authority of the king was to be set aside, and that a group of barons were to take his place. It was a purely oligarchical scheme, in which neither the 'communities' of the shires nor the 'communities' of the boroughs had any part. The new government promised further reforms, but delayed so long that a great deal of dissatisfaction was caused; the knights especially began to protest, and the king's eldest son, Prince Edward, placed himself at their head, demanding additional reforms. When the barons did issue a further scheme of reform, it included little beyond provisions to prevent

encroachments on their own feudal rights. Meanwhile they had made a treaty with France (1259), whereby all claims to Normandy were abandoned; they had made terms with Wales, recognising the power of the conquering Prince Llywelyn; and they had abandoned the mad Sicilian scheme. But soon a quarrel broke out among them. Montfort seems to have alienated the other barons, either by being too anxious for reforms, or by his domineering temper. More and more of the barons deserted to the king's party; and at length, supported by a papal absolution from the necessity of observing his oath to accept the Provisions of Oxford, the king decided to strike for the restoration of his authority. The King of France, asked to arbitrate, gave his decision (1264) wholly in favour of the Crown, declaring the Provisions of Oxford invalid. But the barons refused to accept this decision, and open war broke out. The king was defeated and made a prisoner at the battle of Lewes (1264), and this victory put England into the hands of Montfort.

During the years 1264 and 1265, Montfort had the chance of showing what were his ideas of government, but it cannot be said that his policy made them very clear. In 1264 he summoned a Parliament, to which it seems likely that knights elected by the shire courts were summoned. But there were still elements of opposition. Some of Montfort's escaped enemies were raising troops in France. Some of the great barons on the Welsh borders were openly in arms against him, and attempted to release Prince Edward, who was kept a prisoner as a hostage for his father. Most of the barons seem to have resented Montfort's dictatorial rule; and he seems to have drawn his support mainly from the Church, from the class of knights, and from the townsmen. It was to strengthen himself against this growing opposition that in 1265 he summoned a new Parliament, of a new type, to which he invited only twenty-three of the barons, but most of the higher clergy, and two knights from every shire court. Above all, he invited certain towns which were favourable to his cause to send two representatives apiece; and this was the first occasion upon which borough representatives appeared in an English Parliament. This assembly was not a full representation of the nation; it was rather a congress of Montfort's supporters. Nevertheless it marks an important epoch in the history of English institutions. Prince Edward, in his prison, was watching these proceedings. Though he was naturally opposed to Montfort's high-handed super-

session of the royal authority, Edward knew that reforms were necessary, and he was impressed by the value of Montfort's innovations. The time was soon to come when Edward was to imitate and improve upon the ideas of his captor.

But Montfort's power did not last long enough to let it be seen how he would have constituted the government of England, or whether his parliamentary system was anything more than a device for supporting his declining authority. In 1265 Prince Edward escaped from prison, put himself at the head of the opposition, and at the battle of Evesham defeated and slew the great leader.

Montfort's memory was long revered as that of the founder of English liberties. 'He stood,' says one chronicler, 'like an impregnable tower for the liberties of England'; and 'thus lamentably fell the flower of all knighthood, leaving an example of steadfastness to others.' A bad man does not leave such a reputation; and whether Montfort was a quite disinterested lover of the land of his adoption or not, at any rate some of his work was lasting. He had helped to stimulate into existence among the English not only a feeling of patriotism, and a strong resentment against foreign domination, but also a desire to see the government of the nation carried out in accordance with the nation's will. Many of the writers of the time, chroniclers and ballad-writers alike, express this idea; none more strikingly than one of the political poems which this long controversy produced. 'If the king alone choose,' says this bold preacher, 'he will be easily deceived. Therefore let the community advise, and let it be known what the generality thinks, for they know best their own laws. Since it is their own affairs that are at stake, they will take more care, and will act with an eye to their own peace. . . . We give the first place to the community; we say also that the law rules over the king's dignity, for the law is the light without which he who rules will wander from the right path.'

When plain men were talking in this way, we may truly say that the idea of self-government had come alive in England. The unified nation which had been welded by the despotism of the Normans and Angevins had fairly set out on the long and difficult task of learning to control and direct its own affairs. And that is the most important feature in the history of England in this period.

§ 3. *Edward I. and the Establishment of Parliament.*

But the work of the reign of Henry III. consisted only of experiments and beginnings. It was the reign of Edward I.[1] which gave clear definition to the new purely national policy and to the new national institutions. Edward I. has been called 'the first English king since the Norman Conquest,' and he bore a purely English name, the name of Alfred's successor. From William the Conqueror to Henry III. all the kings had been more French than English, and cared as much for their French as for their English lands. Edward I. cared only for England, and from the outset of his reign abandoned the intention of trying to regain the lost French dominions of Henry II., though he was ready to fight to maintain these which still remained.

It was partly because he was so thorough an Englishman that Edward was admired and loved by his subjects as none of his predecessors and very few of his successors ever were. But it was also because he was a splendid man, and an admirable ruler. Tall, deep-chested, long of limb, he was hardened to every kind of exercise, and was the equal of any knight in the field. But he was also a skilful general, and a very cool-headed and practical organiser. He was brave, obstinate and domineering; he could be very ruthless when angry, and it is recorded that a priest dropped dead of sheer terror, caused by the sight of the king's wrath; but except in moments of passion, he was generally merciful—'No man ever asked mercy of me in vain,' he boasted at the end of his life. He was scrupulously loyal to his plighted word, living up to his motto, *pactum serva*, 'keep troth'; but he was apt to interpret his obligations by the letter of the law, and to insist upon the tenor of his bond as strictly as Shylock. He had in fact the mind of a lawyer in the body of a hero of tournaments, and this was a happy combination at a time when England needed to have her laws defined and organised, but needed also to be governed with a masterful hand. It is not wonderful that such a king should be able to command the affectionate loyalty of a nation that was just awakening to a keen sense of its own nationhood.

Edward's greatest gift to England was the definite organisation of Parliament. His actual reign did not begin until 1274, for he was absent on crusade when his father

[1] There is a good short life of Edward I. by T. F. Tout, in the Twelve English Statesmen Series.

died. But his very first Parliament, in 1275, was a very full representation of every element in the life of the nation, such as had never been seen before. Barons, bishops, and abbots were there, as in the old Great Council; two knights from every shire were there, as in several Parliaments of Henry III.'s reign. But more important, there were two burgesses not merely from a few selected towns, as in De Montfort's Parliament, but from every city and borough, summoned by a general writ through the sheriffs; and thus the elements of the future House of Commons were for the first time assembled. Finally, the Church was fully represented. Thus all the most important elements in the realm were represented in a single national body.

But this very full kind of Parliament, this formal conference of the whole nation, was not frequently held, but only on solemn occasions. The next occasion after 1275 was in 1295, when the peril of a French invasion at the same time as the Scottish war produced a crisis in the national fortunes. Then, once more, a complete Parliament was called—even more complete in some respects that that of 1275. In one of the writs by which it was summoned, Edward made a remarkable appeal to the patriotism of his subjects, telling them that the French king wished to extirpate the English language, and that the whole nation must combine against the common danger. 'What touches all,' he announced in a memorable phrase, 'must be approved by all.'

But for all that, Edward was often content to call a Parliament consisting only of the barons, or of the barons and the knights of the shires, and sometimes he only convened special groups, or the representatives of part of the country, to deal with questions which he chose to regard as specially concerning them. It was the king who decided when and on what questions he would consult the representatives of the nation. Nor did he allow them great powers; he held too high a view of the royal prerogative for that. Parliament did not make the laws; they were, according to the regular phrase which accurately represents the facts, 'made by the king with the *advice* of his Council, and the *assent* of Parliament': all the long list of Edward's laws were very genuinely the work of the king, with the aid of his own selected ministers, and especially of his Chancellor, Robert Burnell. They were merely accepted by Parliament, which scarcely ever raised objections.

The chief function of Parliament, in Edward's view, was

the voting of taxes; indeed, that was practically the only work in which the knights and burgesses had any real share. And even here their share was but small. Normally the king was able to 'live of his own,' on sources of revenue with which Parliament had nothing to do—the rents of royal estates, feudal dues, the profits of the courts, and 'tallages' or special dues levied on towns at the king's pleasure. It was only when the necessities of war demanded extra funds that Parliament was asked to vote special grants. Even over the customs duties on trade Parliament had no control. It is true that in the Parliament of 1275 the customs payable on wool and leather (the chief exports of England) were defined. But this was not a grant from Parliament; the king had always received these dues, and now in his orderly way he drew up a statute to regulate and define their amount; but he did not imagine that he was abandoning the right to levy these dues without Parliament's consent, or even to increase them. In the great crisis of 1294-7 Edward increased the exactions on wool to an unheard-of extent, without consulting Parliament; and it was only with difficulty that he was persuaded, in 1297, to agree to a clause in the Confirmation of Charters, whereby he promised that no *excessive* duties of *that kind* should be imposed in the future. Duties on imported goods also (later known as tonnage and poundage) he held to be entirely his own concern, and he fixed the rates at which they were to be paid, by agreement with the foreign merchants, without ever consulting Parliament. So that the Parliament which Edward I. created was far from being the controlling body in the government: that position still belonged very definitely to the king. But it was at least a great thing that a body had been brought into existence which represented the whole nation, and through which the king could feel the nation's pulse.

§ 4. *The Lawyer-King as National Leader.*

Edward I. was a very great lawgiver, and his statutes covered almost the whole range of national life: the maintenance of order, the system of national defence, the regulation of trade, the organisation of the law courts, the position of the Church, and, above all, the rules governing the tenure of the land. It would be impossible to give a clear idea of their character, without entering into far greater detail than our space allows. But in general it may be

said that their object was to make clearer and more definite the rights and duties of every class of citizens. Three points which are illustrated in his statutes may perhaps be briefly touched upon.

In the first place, it is plain that, though England was probably the best governed country in Europe in that age, there was still a great deal of turbulence and violence. Private war between barons was not uncommon, and brigandage was rife. It is significant that Edward found it necessary to enact that all woods should be cut down for two hundred yards on each side of public roads, so as to prevent the ambushing of travellers by brigands. Whenever the king was out of the country, disorder was apt to break out; and this fact is enough to show that a masterful hand was still necessary at the centre of things, and that anything like parliamentary supremacy was a long way from being possible. In his attempt to deal with disorder, Edward adopted a very important device. He ordained that every shire court should elect knights to act as conservators of the peace; and he thus began the policy of entrusting to the lesser country gentlemen the business of looking after local government—a policy which was to have very important consequences in the future.

In the second place, Edward found a great deal of difficulty in dealing with the powers claimed by the feudal lords, which conflicted with his idea of a strong national government. When he tried to check feudal privileges by instituting an inquiry into the right of their holders to have them (*quo warranto* inquiries), he aroused a storm of opposition, and had to give way to a considerable extent. The greater barons were steadily diminishing in number, as their families died out. This led, in part, to an increase in the numbers, wealth and influence of the knights or country gentlemen, and Edward did what he could to encourage this process. But the decrease in the number of barons also meant that those who were left were in many cases richer and more powerful, having often added barony to barony by marrying heiresses; and this was to be a source of great trouble in the next two centuries. The Crown tried to reduce this danger by securing the greatest marriages for members of the royal family, and by these means Edward's brother Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, became an exceedingly powerful person. He was the founder of the House of Lancaster, which for a century to come was almost to rival the king himself in wealth and influence; and though

Edmund remained on good terms with his brother, his successors were not always so amenable.

Troubles with the barons, therefore, were by no means at an end, though they were taking a new form. But the barons now found it difficult to resist the king unless they could associate themselves with popular discontents. They found their great opportunity in the crisis of 1294-1297, when popular discontent was aroused by Edward's heavy exactions to meet the cost of the Scottish and French wars; and the proud king found it hard to stomach the defiance which he then met, and the concessions which he was forced to make in the Confirmation of the Charters. On that occasion baronial opposition was useful to the nation, because it put an end to what had been real abuses of the royal power. But the episode showed that the barons were still dangerous.

Lastly, in his endeavour to rule as a truly national king, Edward found himself brought into repeated conflict with the Church, which claimed privileges of independence of a dangerous kind. As the lands of the Church never lapsed through lack of heirs, like baronial estates, and as benefactions were constantly increasing its possessions, more and more of the land of the country was falling into its control. To put a stop to this Edward enacted the Statute of Mortmain, which forbade the grant of land to the Church. This naturally aroused indignation among churchmen. But the greatest conflict of all was a financial conflict which broke out in 1296. Pope Boniface VIII. had issued a Bull forbidding the clergy to make any grant of money to lay princes without his consent, and Archbishop Winchelsey used this as a ground for refusing clerical grants towards the cost of the war with France. But this was as much as to say that the Church was not part of the nation, and could refuse to share in the national burdens. Edward's reply was strong and effective. He declared the whole of the clergy outlawed: that is to say, no protection would be given them by the law courts. For if they would not share the burdens, they should not have the advantages, of the national government. The churchmen gave way. Later the Pope ordered Edward to desist from his attacks on Scotland, on the ground that Scotland belonged to the Papal See. Edward left the reply to Parliament, which, speaking for the whole nation, declared that even if the king wished to give way to this claim the nation would not permit him.

Thus, in all ways, Edward I. proved himself a national king. He proved it in nothing so much as in his comparative indifference to his rights as a French feudatory, and his strenuous activity in the attempt to extend English power over the whole of Britain, by the conquest of Wales and Scotland. When the French king Philip IV. on quite unscrupulous pretexts attacked Gascony, Edward did his best to make peace; and although he fought to defend his possessions, and fought on the whole successfully, he never allowed the Gascon campaign to interrupt his struggle for the mastery of Scotland. In this he fully represented the feelings of his subjects. The barons made difficulties about going to fight in France, but they made no difficulties about fighting in Wales or Scotland. For they regarded the French lands as the king's private concern, but the conquest of all Britain was a national ambition.

[The best modern summaries of the periods are by T. F. Tout, *History of England, 1216-1377*, and H. W. C. Davis, *England under the Normans and Angevins*. For constitutional history Stubbs' *Constitutional History*, vol. ii., is invaluable; the first section of Maitland's *English Constitutional History* gives an admirably clear account of English institutions at the death of Edward I.; see also Prothero's *Simon de Montfort* and Bateson's *Mediæval England*. There is a good selection of extracts from the chronicles, etc., edited by Miss Hilda Johnston, and a shorter selection is provided by Robieson's *Growth of Parliament and the War with Scotland*.]

CHAPTER III

THE CONQUEST OF WALES[1]

Llywelyn the Great, 1194-1245 : Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, 1246-1283.

THE English were now a united nation, full of national pride, and the result of this was that they began, under the leadership of their national kings, to try to make conquests at the expense of their more divided neighbours, the Welsh, the Scots and the French. For more than a century and a half we have now to trace a period of fiercely fought national wars, which had a very important influence upon the history of the islands.

Amid their rugged and beautiful mountains the Welsh had been able to keep the English at bay during the long centuries before the Norman Conquest. Though their princes sometimes did homage to the English kings, and though English armies sometimes made raids far into the country, Wales was never conquered. On the contrary Offa, King of Mercia, in the eighth century, had found it necessary to build a long dyke to defend the Midlands against Welsh raids, and Offa's Dyke long continued to represent the boundary between two quite different nationalities. Behind the Dyke the Welsh maintained their own language and their own laws and customs.

They were in some ways a very rude and backward people. Except in the low-lying lands of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan, the plough was scarcely known ; and the people lived on the produce of their cattle and sheep, eating little bread, but mostly milk, cheese and meat, like the Germans in the days of Cæsar. Their rough wooden huts were of little value, and they wore the simplest clothing, shoes being almost unknown, except among the rich. Hardened by constant exposure in the rough mountain uplands, they were very daring fighting men, excelling especially in the use of the bow. When they were attacked, it was easy for them to drive their cattle up into the recesses

[1] For this chapter see the map of Wales, Atlas, Plate 36 (*c*).

of the mountains ; they could leave their huts to be burned, knowing that they could quickly rebuild them from the wood of the forests. It was therefore a very difficult thing to conquer Wales.

Politically the Welsh were very much divided. There were three main provinces, Gwynedd or North Wales, Powys or East-Central Wales, and Deheubarth or South Wales. Of these Gwynedd had a sort of recognised leadership : it included the fertile and sacred Isle of Anglesey, and the impregnable fastnesses of Snowdon. But between the three principalities there was almost unceasing war, and it was very rarely that the supremacy of a single prince was recognised throughout Wales. Within the principalities there were many tribal divisions, and there were constant feuds among these clans, as in the Highlands of Scotland down to a late date. Even in the face of English attacks these feuds were seldom dropped, and Welsh chieftains were often to be found on the side of the Norman or English conquerors from the time of William the Conqueror onwards. In the end, therefore, the English conquest was a good thing for Wales, because it brought peace and order and systematic government. But this need not diminish the admiration which we must feel for the gallantry of the long resistance.

Although the Welsh were backward in the material aspects of civilisation, they were ahead of their English neighbours in at least one important respect. Wales was a land of poets and singers ; and none were more honoured among them than the bards, who were always welcome in the rude hospitable halls of the chieftains, and who kept alive delight in the beauty of Nature, and the memory of gallant deeds in the past. Especially did they hand down the stories of the long fight against the Teutonic invaders ; and the legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, which later became the delight of all Europe, took shape in the ever-growing lays of the Welsh bards. The great age of Welsh poetry came in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the national spirit of the Welsh was stirred to enthusiasm by the successes of the great princes of that period in the struggle for independence.

The Conquest of Wales began with the coming of the Normans to England. In order to bridle the wild mountaineers, William the Conqueror and his successors allowed to the great barons whom they established on the Welsh borders or ' marches,' a far greater degree of inde-

pendence than was permitted to their fellows elsewhere, and encouraged them to undertake the subjugation of the country: throughout the mediæval period the 'Marcher Lords,' as they were called, continued to be the most warlike and restless of the baronage. In the generation following 1066, it looked as if this policy was going to lead to the complete conquest of Wales. In the north the powerful Earls of Chester overran the modern county of Flint, and often extended their power as far west as the river Conway; but they were never able to subdue the wild country of Snowdon, and, though they built many castles to secure their conquests, the unconquered hosts of Gwynedd continually sallied forth and drove them back. In the centre the Montgomeries, Earls of Shrewsbury, pressed into the region of Powys, much of which became largely Anglicised: the fact that one of the Welsh counties still bears the name of Montgomery is a sign of their work. In the eastern part of these lands they, and other border barons, built many castles. But Powys, like Gwynedd, was never completely subdued, though no part of it remained so continuously free from English or Norman influence as Gwynedd. In the south a whole series of Norman barons carved out estates for themselves, and there is no part of the British Islands where castles are so numerous as in Monmouth, Glamorgan, Radnor and the South Welsh coast. At the beginning of the twelfth century the rich lands of Pembrokeshire were so completely conquered by the barons of the house of Clare, that they were settled with English and Flemish colonists, lost their Welsh character altogether, and became a 'little England beyond Wales.'

But the rapid Norman successes during the generation following 1066 roused to ardour the patriotism of the Welsh, and, except in the south, the tide of Anglo-Norman conquest received a set-back during the twelfth century. In vain did William II. and Henry I. lead expeditions into Wales; they were never able to secure any permanent mastery. Even Henry II. could not conquer the indomitable mountaineers, and towards the end of his reign (Council of Oxford, 1177), he was fain to be content with the formal homage of the principal Welsh chieftains, leaving their customs and modes of life undisturbed. The spirit of Welsh national patriotism had been strengthened by resistance to the conquerors. When Henry II. led a formidable expedition into Wales in 1163, it is recorded that he asked a wise old Welsh chieftain what he thought would be its result. 'I doubt not,' was

the reply, 'that now, as oftentimes of yore, this race of mine may be brought low and much broken by the might of English arms. Yet the wrath of man, if God's anger be not added, will never utterly destroy it. For I am persuaded that no other race than this, and no other tongue than this of Wales, happen what may, will answer in the great day of judgment for this little corner of the earth.' The old man prophesied well. For Wales has remained a distinct little nation even though it has been brought under the same government as its greater neighbours.

The long absence of Richard I., and the anarchy of John's reign, and the continual disturbance of the reign of Henry III. gave to the patriotism of Wales a chance of expressing itself. The chief hero of this period was the Prince of Gwynedd or North Wales, Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, sometimes called Llywelyn the Great (1194-1245). He forced all the Welsh chieftains to do homage to him, and so made himself the head of the Welsh nation. He annexed Powys, greatly reduced the power of the Marcher Lords, and forced even the English-speaking district of Pembrokeshire to do homage to him. And although he several times did homage to the King of England, he was able to meet English armies on equal terms, and was left to enjoy practical independence almost throughout his long reign. Inspired by his triumph, the bards of all Wales sang his praises, and Welsh poetry underwent a great revival. He was the 'eagle of men,' the 'devastator of England'; 'the sound of his coming,' they sang, 'is like the roar of the wave as it rushes to the shore'; and old prophecies of Merlin, the bard of Arthur's court, were recalled and believed to refer to him.

There was an interval of confusion after the death of Llywelyn the Great, but soon his place was taken by another vigorous prince, his grandson Llywelyn ap Gruffydd (1246-1283). Taking advantage of the strife between Henry III. and the barons, the second Llywelyn was able to carry his power to an even greater height than his predecessor. He conquered a large part of the lands of the Marcher Lords. He made alliance on equal terms with Simon de Montfort (1265), on the basis of a recognition of all his conquests. And even when the party of Montfort was defeated, he was able to obtain in 1267 a treaty whereby he was recognised as Prince of Wales—a title never before conceded to any Welsh prince by the English kings—and as feudal superior of all the Welsh chieftains, on condition of doing homage to the King of England and paying a small tribute. For

ten years his power remained almost undisturbed, except by the treacherous intrigues of his brother David.

But the accession of Edward I. brought a change. Llywelyn feared and distrusted the new king, who had shown during Henry III.'s reign much unwillingness to accept the growth of Welsh independence. The ceremony of homage was put off from year to year; the tribute was left unpaid. And at length, in 1276, two years after he assumed the reins of power in England, Edward resolved to organise an expedition for the final overthrow of the Welsh prince. All the Marcher barons were glad to seize the chance of breaking Llywelyn's power: even the prince's own brother David joined the English king. A simultaneous onslaught, by land and sea, from the south, the centre and the north, was organised; and in November 1277 Llywelyn was forced to make a peace (treaty of Conway), by which he lost all his conquests, and was confined to the region west of the river Conway, corresponding to the modern counties of Anglesey, Carnarvon and Merioneth.

This was not the end of the struggle. In 1282 a revolt suddenly broke out in the districts which had been taken from Llywelyn, and spread rapidly over Mid and South Wales. Llywelyn could not resist the temptation to throw in his lot with the rebels; and so a second elaborate Welsh campaign had to be undertaken. But the most desperate resistance was helpless against the English forces closing in on all sides. Llywelyn himself was killed in an obscure skirmish in the south, and with his death all hope of success vanished. Llywelyn left no son. His treacherous brother David, who had begun the last revolt, was captured and executed as a traitor. The triumphant lays of the bards were turned to sadness as they saw Wales lie at the mercy of the conqueror. 'O God!' cried one of them, 'O God! would that the sea might engulf the land! Why are we left to long-drawn weariness?'

To a certain extent Edward I. recognised the distinctness of Wales from England. He made no attempt to include Welsh representatives in the English Parliament. He left undisturbed many Welsh laws, such as the laws of succession to land. When his son was born at Carnarvon in April 1284, he presented the infant to the people as a prince who could not speak a word of English; and in 1301 the boy was created Prince of Wales, as a concession to Welsh national sentiment; the title has ever since been borne by

the heir to the crown. But Edward was determined that Wales should never again be independent. He secured the conquered territories by building a series of great castles, Conway, Carnarvon, Beaumaris, Criccieth and Harlech. He encouraged the growth of towns and of industry. He introduced the English shire system, with its sheriffs, bailiffs and shire courts, into about half of the country, all the land which was under his direct control being divided into counties on the English model.[1] The other half remained under the feudal jurisdiction of the Marcher Lords.

Wales was conquered, but not Anglicised. It remained a nation, living its life apart; though it now enjoyed a growing prosperity, due to the banishing of the old ceaseless clan wars. National feeling continued to be strong, as was shown by the extraordinary enthusiasm with which the rising of Owen Glendower was supported in the years 1401-1406.[2] It was not until after a Welsh line of kings had ascended the English throne in 1485, that Wales was politically incorporated in England; and even then, and down to the present day, it remains a distinct little nation, with its own traditions and its own language and customs, which no one has ever attempted to destroy, living in friendly partnership with its greater neighbours.

[J. E. Lloyd's *History of Wales* (2 vols.) is the standard history down to the reign of Edward I. O. M. Edwards' *Wales* (Story of the Nations); see also Little, *Mediæval Wales*.]

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[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 36 (*c*), where these arrangements are shown.
[2] See below, Chap. VII., p. 161.

CHAPTER IV

THE INDEPENDENCE OF SCOTLAND

David I., 1124: Malcolm, 1153: William, 1165: Alexander II., 1214: Alexander III., 1249: Margaret, 1286: John Balliol, 1292: Robert I., 1306: David II., 1329.

§ 1. *The Development of the Scottish Monarchy.*

AFTER the conquest of Wales, the national spirit of England next expressed itself in an attempt to subjugate Scotland. The result was to create among the Scots, hitherto a much divided people, a prickly spirit of national pride, and to initiate a long series of wars which lasted for more than three hundred years, and only came to an end when a Scottish king succeeded to the English throne in 1603.

Scotland was a small, barren and thinly peopled country; yet there was no country in Europe more divided in race and language. The south-east, between the Forth and the Tweed, which had formerly been part of the English kingdom of Northumbria, was mainly English in race, and wholly English in speech: it had only been a part of the Scottish realm since 1018. The south-west, between the Clyde and the Solway, was almost purely Celtic in race, though it had recently become English-speaking; and it had till the eleventh century formed a distinct State. Galloway, in the extreme south-west, was of Gaelic race and speech. North of the Forth and Clyde the people were mainly of Celtic blood. But along the north-eastern coast, from Fife to Elgin, there had been many English, Danish and Norman settlers, and these regions had begun to be English-speaking, while the western and central Highlands were still purely Gaelic-speaking. In the extreme north, in Caithness and the Orkneys and Shetlands, the population was largely Norse, and the islands of the west had long been ruled by Norsemen. How was a united nation to be made out of these conflicting elements?

The first step was taken during the reign of David I. (1124-1153), who brought into Scotland many Norman

nobles, introduced with their aid a feudal mode of organisation in a large part of the country, strengthened and enriched the Church, founded many free boroughs, and tried to diminish the endless tribal discord by reproducing in Scotland the English system of county government under royal sheriffs, and by substituting trial by jury for the old blood-feud and trial by battle. From David's time onwards Norman barons were among the chief magnates of the country, and the more powerful clan chieftains tended to imitate their methods of rule. But these Norman barons were mostly also landowners in England, and therefore could not feel an exclusive Scottish patriotism. Moreover the English kings claimed a feudal superiority over Scotland. It is certain that most of the Scottish kings, from the time of Edward the Elder onwards, had rendered some sort of homage to the King of England; but their homage was generally for lands which they held in England, or for parts of Scotland which had formerly been under English rule. The only case in which the English king was definitely recognised as feudal superior of the whole realm of Scotland was when William the Lion was taken prisoner by Henry II. (1174); but he bought back his independence from Richard I. in 1189. The question of the feudal relationship between England and Scotland was an extremely complicated one, and the English kings never wholly abandoned their claims. But it was not a very important question: the really important question was whether a sense of national unity was going to grow up in divided Scotland. For if this happened, and as soon as it happened, it must become impossible for the destinies of Scotland to be decided by technicalities of feudal law.

During the reigns of David's sons, Malcolm (1153-1165) and William the Lion (1165-1214), some advance was made: the Southern Hebrides were conquered from the Norsemen, and the system of justice was improved. The reign of Alexander II. (1214-1249) was honourably distinguished in the annals of Scotland as a reign of peace. His successor, Alexander III. (1249-1286), who married a sister of Edward I. of England, won a splendid victory over the Norsemen at Largs (1263), finally drove them out of the Hebrides, and compelled the chieftains of the Isles to recognise him as their king. Although the island chieftains, and especially the great Macdonald Lords of the Isles, long remained very independent, they were henceforth subjects of the kingdom of Scotland. The kingdom had therefore practically reached

its full extent, though the Orkneys and Shetlands were not acquired until 1469.

§ 2. *Edward I.'s Attempt to subjugate Scotland.*

In 1285 Scotland had enjoyed more than a century of comparative peace and steadily improving government, and her widely different peoples were learning to live together. But their unity still depended mainly upon the vigour of their king. And unfortunately, when Alexander III. was killed by the fall of his horse from a cliff in 1286, he left behind him no sons. His daughter (who was also Edward I.'s niece) had married the King of Norway, but had died in giving birth to a daughter, Margaret. This infant of two years old, known as the Maid of Norway, was the heiress to the Scottish throne, and was formally recognised as queen at a solemn meeting of the Scottish baronage. If she had lived the union of England and Scotland might have been peaceably brought about, for Edward I. had conceived the idea of marrying her to the infant Prince of Wales. But she died on the voyage from Norway (1290); and at once Scotland was plunged into civil war between the adherents of various claimants to the Scottish throne.

The chief claimants, John Balliol and Robert Bruce, were both Norman barons, with lands and interests in England as well as Scotland. Both were descended from daughters of William the Lion. The friends of both appealed to Edward I. to support their claims. Edward saw in this situation an opportunity for establishing the feudal superiority of the English crown over Scotland. He came with an army to the Tweed in 1291, and proclaimed himself Lord Paramount. The chief Scottish barons (many of whom, like the claimants, were half English) admitted his supremacy. The *community* of Scotland, we are told, protested in vain: Edward heard the claims, and in 1292 gave his award in favour of John Balliol, whose claim was indeed the best.

The new king was compelled to do homage, but Edward meant to make his supremacy something more than a mere form. He asserted his right to hear appeals from the Scottish courts. He required the Scottish king to be present at English Parliaments. He even demanded that Scottish troops should be sent to fight on the English side in France. Balliol could not resist the growing anger of his subjects. He made an alliance with France (1295), which was to last

for nearly three hundred years, and openly defied the English king. But he was swiftly defeated and dethroned, and now Edward claimed that Scotland had lapsed to him because of the treason of her king, and proceeded to undertake the direct government of the country. He carried off the sacred crowning-stone from Scone, on which the patriarch Jacob was believed to have laid his head on the night when he saw the angels' ladder; the stone was built into the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, on which every English ruler since that date has been enthroned. All the Scottish nobles took an oath of allegiance. All the castles were occupied and garrisoned by Englishmen, and English nobles were appointed to the chief offices of state. It seemed, by 1296, as if Scotland had been definitely subjugated.

§ 3. *The Scottish Resistance under Wallace and Bruce.*

But although the leading nobles accepted the situation, the common people and the lesser gentry bitterly resented the English supremacy; and they found a wonderful leader in Sir William Wallace, younger son of a small laird of Renfrewshire. Wallace won his fame in a series of outlaw raids against the English.[1] We know very little about his earlier adventures. But we know that by the summer of 1297 he had stirred the greater part of the country into open rebellion, and men eager for the destruction of the English power were flocking to his standard. In September 1297 he won a brilliant victory over the English governor, Warenne, at Stirling Bridge. During the next few months the greater part of the country was rid of its conquerors, and Wallace and his men were harrying Northumberland with the utmost ferocity. In 1298 Wallace declared himself Guardian of the Realm, on behalf of the exiled and deposed Balliol. But this seemed presumption in the eyes of the Scottish nobles, for Wallace was only a humble knight. Most of them—especially Robert Bruce, who himself hoped for the crown—joined the English side. Edward was not the man to let his conquest slip from his grasp. He marched into Scotland with a large army, and in July 1298, at Falkirk, destroyed Wallace's army of spearmen, mainly by the terrible fire of the English archers, whose value in battle was now first established.

But the Scottish rising was a national revolt, and

[1] For this chapter see the map, Atlas, Plate 36 (*d*).

was not to be crushed by a single battle. Edward was unable to pursue his success, because he had at the same time a war with France and a quarrel with his Parliament on his hands. For five years a Council of Regency, formed by some of the leading Scottish nobles, made a pretence of ruling the country—Wallace, the mere knight, falling into the background. But in 1303 Edward was able to return, with another large army, and subjugate the much ravaged country. Once more the nobles abandoned the national cause, and made their peace; and Edward, anxious for a settlement, offered pardon to all save 'Messire William le Waleys,' who still strove to keep the struggle for national independence alive. Wallace was captured and betrayed for a reward by Sir John Monteith, and in 1305 was hanged, drawn and quartered in London. His desperate heroism seemed to have failed. But he had awakened a nation, and the Scots who had with Wallace bled were not now likely to submit to his conqueror. 'The ravens had not pyked his bones bare before the Scots were up again for freedom.'

Their new leader was Robert Bruce, grandson of the claimant of 1291. A Norman baron, with large estates in England as well as in South-Western Scotland, he had alternately supported and opposed Edward, and had hitherto seemed to be governed by nothing but personal ambition. Now he saw a chance of using the smouldering anger of the Scots to seize the crown for himself. At the beginning of 1306 he seems to have tried to enlist in his conspiracy the Red Comyn, a powerful baron of the North, and a rival claimant to the throne, who had been one of the leaders of the Scottish resistance from 1298 to 1304, but had then made his peace with the English king. Bruce and Comyn had an interview in the Grey Friars' Church at Dumfries, in February 1306. No one knows what passed at the interview; but the end of it was that Bruce slew Comyn before the high altar. For such a deed there could be no hope of pardon; Bruce knew that he must either lead a national revolt to victory, or perish like Wallace.

It was a bad beginning; and although some of the nobles and some of the bishops (in spite of a papal excommunication) joined Bruce, all the friends of Comyn, who were numerous and powerful, took up arms against him, while Edward prepared a new expedition. Bruce was hastily crowned at Scone. But he had only a small force, which was promptly defeated near Perth by an English army.

His queen was captured; one of his brothers was executed; and he himself had to flee into the wild west country, where he spent a desperate winter, hunted among the hills by enemies on all hands.

The early part of Bruce's career was discreditable; but in this time of trial he showed himself a great man and a great leader, dauntless in adversity, full of resource, a daring and skilful captain, able to inspire his followers with enthusiastic devotion. And some of the captains who gathered round him, Edward Bruce, and the Black Douglas, and Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, were pure heroes of romance. We cannot here follow their thrilling adventures: they are spiritedly told in Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*. In 1307 Bruce had landed again in his own country of Ayrshire, and was fighting with a mobile little force there and in Galloway. Meanwhile the great Edward of England was drawing near, with an iron resolution to destroy him and a mighty force to back his will. But before Edward had even crossed the border he died, at Burgh-on-Sands, near Carlisle. His weakling son, Edward II., gave up the expedition after a quite futile march into Scotland; and a second expedition in 1311 was equally ineffective.

§ 4. *Bannockburn and the Establishment of Independence.*

Throughout his reign, indeed, Edward II. was distracted by unceasing disputes with his barons, of which we shall have something to say in another place. And the result was that Bruce was left free, during seven years, to overcome his Scottish enemies, and to conquer one after another the castles, with their English garrisons, by means of which the country was held in control.[1] We cannot trace this exciting story; but by 1314 every castle had fallen save Stirling, which, because it controlled the passage from the Highlands to the Lowlands, was regarded as the key of Scotland. To relieve this fortress and preserve the last chance of subjugating Scotland, a huge English army, including levies from Ireland and Wales and the chivalry of Aquitaine, advanced through the Lowlands. Bruce, with inferior numbers, met them on June 24, 1314, on the field of Bannockburn, to the south-east of Stirling, and won a glorious victory, which secured the independence of Scotland. Eight years earlier the cause of Scottish freedom

[1] See the maps, Atlas, Plate 36 (*d*) and 39.

had seemed an utterly forlorn hope; but the gallantry of Bruce and his captains, backed by the resolution of a now united people, and helped by the incompetence of Edward II., had redeemed a desperate chance. The Scots had become an indomitable nation; Bannockburn had made it clear that if ever the peoples of the islands were to be united, it must not be by conquest, but by an equal partnership.

The war, indeed, did not end with Bannockburn, for fourteen years passed before the results of the great battle were recognised by treaty. Merciless Scottish raids into England filled the next years, and the border country was desolated, as it was so often to be during the next three centuries. Encouraged by the success of the Scots, the Welsh broke into a revolt, which it took hard fighting to subdue. The Irish also rebelled, and offered the crown to Bruce's brother Edward, who, during the years 1315-1318, devastated the country, until he was killed in battle. The only result of this expedition was to weaken permanently the English power in Ireland, and to plunge that unhappy country into a lasting anarchy. After the fall of Edward II. a fierce Scottish invasion of Northern England brought on a new bout of heavy fighting, in which the Scots had much the better; and in March 1328 peace was at last concluded, the English king definitely abandoning all claims upon the Scottish crown, and acknowledging Bruce as king. Next year (1329) Robert Bruce died, leaving to his infant son, David II., the throne of the united Scottish nation, which he had done so much to make.

But the troubles of Scotland were not yet at an end. Torn asunder by a whole generation of incessant warfare, the unhappy land was impoverished and largely depopulated, while its nobles and gentry had acquired a habit of fighting, which made them very difficult to keep in restraint. An infant king could not cure these ills; and the quarrels of the nobles who desired to act as regents only made them worse. Moreover many nobles who had opposed Bruce had lost their estates and been exiled to England; they inevitably plotted for revenge, and in spite of the treaty of 1328 the English king, now the ambitious and warlike Edward III., was very ready to give them his backing.

In 1332 John Balliol's son Edward, with a number of exiled nobles of the Balliol and Comyn parties, made a sudden raid in English ships upon Northern Scotland. They landed in the Tay, beat the regent at Dupplin Moor, and seized Perth. Edward Balliol got himself crowned at Scone,

and in order to obtain English support acknowledged Edward III. as his liege lord. He was soon driven out of Scotland again by the patriot party. But next year, 1333, an English army came to his assistance, and inflicted a disastrous defeat upon the Scots at Halidon Hill, near Berwick. This gave the English party for a time the upper hand. The young King David had to be sent to France for safety, and Edward Balliol actually ceded to the English king all the south-eastern counties, from Edinburgh to Berwick. But this monstrous surrender destroyed all chance of his being accepted by the Scots. Desperate and confused fighting went on during the next few years, and at some moments it looked as if, despite all the labours of Wallace and Bruce, Scotland was going to be subjugated by English arms. What saved the situation was the outbreak of war between France and England, which made it impossible for Edward III. to devote his strength to the conquest of Scotland. In 1341 King David thought it safe to return from France, and from that date onward it may be said that the independence of Scotland was never in peril.

David II., unfortunately, was a foolish and reckless ruler. In the hope of helping his French allies, he invaded England in the year of the battle of Cressy, and was defeated and taken prisoner at Neville's Cross, near Durham (1346). He remained in captivity till 1357, and the impoverished country had to pay a heavy ransom for his release. In his absence desperate feuds among the nobles tore unhappy Scotland asunder; nor was there much improvement after his return. In 1371 he died, and the direct line of Robert Bruce came to an end. His successor, Robert II., was the son of Bruce's daughter, and the first of the tragic house of Stewart. With the appearance of that historic dynasty we may perhaps close for the present the restless and warlike story of Scotland. Wars and intrigues among the Scottish nobles still went on; border frays with the English were still unceasing, and for two centuries to come there was no peace along the frontier lines, where every house had to be fortified, and every man had to be at all times ready to defend himself in arms. But this border fighting did not seriously disturb the situation, though its story is full of romantic episodes like the wild fight of Otterburn in 1388, which gave birth to the great ballad of Chevy Chase. Indeed the most valuable product of all this wild work was the wonderful ballad literature, which can be studied in Percy's *Reliques* and in Scott's collection of ballads.

In truth the independence of Scotland had been securely established. Behind the screen of the border fighting clans, the Scotts and the Kers, the Elliots and the Armstrongs, she lived her own rude and turbulent life, and through many troubles was moulding her own strenuous, dogged and gallant national character. Scotland was poor, thinly peopled and disorderly; but there were great qualities in the little nation that had been welded in the fires of war. On the surface it may appear to have been a misfortune that Great Britain should have lost the chance of complete unity which seemed to be so near in the time of Edward I.; yet the distinctive qualities bred in the Scots by their long struggle for freedom were to form a great contribution in the future to the common life of the islands, and it was a good thing that they should be left free to develop in their own way. The peoples out of which the British Commonwealth was to grow were not to be a single unified nation, but a brotherhood or partnership of free and different nations. It took them a long time to learn to live together in peace and mutual respect, but the lesson was worth learning, and it had great effects.

[Hume Brown's or Andrew Lang's *History of Scotland* (vol. i.). Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* are still eminently worth reading. The story of the battle of Bannockburn has been reconstructed in Mackintosh's *Bannockburn*.]

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO CONQUER FRANCE

§ 1. *The Motives of the Attempt.*

It had been the dream of Edward I., one of the greatest of English kings, to unite all the peoples of the islands under a single rule, and he had come near to success. Although he never visited Ireland, a mass of documents shows that he did not neglect Irish business: the supremacy of the English crown was recognised throughout that country, and there was no period of the Middle Ages when the final triumph of English over Celtic civilisation seemed nearer at hand. But under the flaccid rule of Edward II. (1307-1327) the authority of the English crown in Ireland rapidly declined; before long it was limited to a small district near Dublin, which was known as the Pale. From Edward I. down to the end of the mediæval period, though there were frequent military expeditions, the control of the English government over Ireland was almost negligible. Again Edward I. had, we have seen, conquered Wales, though without destroying the distinctive Welsh nationality. But his successors throughout the rest of the Middle Age did nothing at all to make the relations of the two countries more intimate. Finally, Edward I. had twice conquered Scotland, and if he had lived ten years longer might have subjugated it completely. But the frivolity and incompetence of Edward II. allowed Bruce to establish Scottish independence; and although the warlike Edward III. very nearly succeeded in achieving his grandfather's ambition, he allowed himself to be drawn off to other enterprises before the task was accomplished. The unity of the islands had seemed to be within grasp at the end of the thirteenth century; at the end of the fourteenth it seemed quite beyond realisation.

This failure was due in the first place to the weakness and folly of Edward II. But his successor, Edward III., might have taken up the idea again, and perhaps carried it to

success; instead, he was tempted to engage in fruitless enterprises of conquest in France, which led to a hundred years of foreign warfare, and in many ways, as we shall see, changed the course of English history.

It was partly the character of Edward III. that led him into these adventures, but still more the spirit of the age. For the ruling classes of all Europe in the fourteenth century were influenced by a sort of spurious chivalry, which rejoiced in war for its own sake as the most knightly of all occupations, and counted it greater honour to win glory in fighting, for whatever cause, than to give happiness or justice to the mass of labouring men and women. The spirit of this decaying chivalry is wonderfully rendered in Froissart's *Chronicles of the English Wars in France*,[1] and the reader of that fascinating book, who is at first likely to be captivated by the glamour of knightly deeds and knightly courtesies, will presently be chilled and disgusted by the total indifference of these gay and valiant knights to the misery and suffering which they inflicted upon the poor. In their eyes the peasant or the citizen was a mean soul, for whom no consideration was demanded, and who existed only to render possible the splendours of knightly adventure. Edward III., who founded the most noble order of Knights of the Garter in honour of the fair Countess of Salisbury, thought nothing of breaking his pledged word to the burgesses of Parliament, and was only with difficulty persuaded by the implorings of his queen to spare the lives of the merchants of Calais, who came out from the besieged city to beg his mercy. His son, the Black Prince, the most gallant and chivalrous knight of his age, waited humbly as a servitor on the captive King of France, after the battle of Poitiers; but he thought it an equally chivalrous thing to squander the lives and revenues of Englishmen in restoring to the throne which he had justly forfeited the treacherous tyrant, Pedro the Cruel of Castile; and he saw nothing unchivalrous in ordering the cold-blooded massacre of three thousand men, women and children of Limoges, who had angered him by defending their city. Wars undertaken in such a spirit could bring no lasting benefit even to the conquerors; and the men who conducted them, daring and brilliant fighters as they were, could achieve no permanent results. The victories they won were often of a dazzling brilliance; but they appear profitless and even sordid against the background of utter misery and poverty

[1] There is an abridged edition included in the Globe Library.

which resulted from them. Yet because these wars deeply affected the future fortunes of the islands, both for good and ill, it is necessary to say something about them.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the French monarchy had been altogether overshadowed by its great vassals, and especially by the Angevin rulers of England, who held more than half of the kingdom of France. But during the thirteenth century, while the English were achieving national unity, and while the once powerful kingdom of Germany was falling into confusion, a succession of great kings, Philip Augustus, Louis IX. and Philip the Fair, had built up the power of the French monarchy with such rapidity and success that by 1300 it had become, beyond rivalry, the greatest power in Europe. They had reconquered almost the whole of the French lands of Henry II.; they had brought to subjection most of the other great French vassals; they even seemed to have tamed the Papacy. Everything seemed to combine to secure for the French kings the supreme position in Europe. Yet their position was by no means as strong as it appeared. Their power had grown too rapidly to be very deeply rooted. Their conquered feudatories were restless and ready for revolt; and the sense of national unity and national pride had scarcely yet had time to take possession of the long-divided French people. For them, as for the Scots, an ordeal of fire was necessary to weld them into a united nation; and in both cases it was the attempt of the English to impose their dominion which produced this effect.

It was inevitable that an ambitious English king should remember that his not very distant ancestors had ruled more than half of France. It was inevitable also that the powerful French kings should cast longing eyes at the small province in the south-west, behind Bordeaux and Bayonne, which still remained in English possession. There had been war between the two monarchies at such frequent intervals ever since the Norman Conquest that it seemed to be in the natural order of events; even Edward I., though he cared little for his French lands, was drawn into war against his will by the aggressions of Philip the Fair. Another cause of friction was that France gave continual assistance to the rebellious Scots: John Balliol made an alliance with France in 1295, and it was in France that the young King David took refuge in 1334. Again the French kings were striving to subjugate Flanders, which, though nominally a

part of France, had long been almost independent; and the great Flemish manufacturing cities, Ypres and Ghent and Bruges, had intimate commercial relations with England, for they bought two-thirds of the English wool-crop every year. When the Flemish towns asked for Edward III.'s help to maintain their freedom against France (1337), it seemed wise policy to give it. Yet again, exiled claimants to two French feudal States appeared at the English court to beg Edward's assistance, and this was just the sort of demand that was likely to appeal to the spurious chivalry of the age. Finally, the direct male line of succession to the French crown had come to an end; and Edward III. could put forward a plausible claim to the succession, his mother being the sister of the last king in the direct line. This claim to the throne was not, indeed, the real ground of the war. Edward III. had recognised the succession of the reigning king, Philip of Valois (Philip VI.), in 1328, and had done homage for his lands in Guienne. But the claim to the throne could be put forward as a pretext when the great adventure was undertaken on other grounds.

§ 2. *The War and its Consequences.*

It was in 1337 that Edward determined to attempt the conquest of France. This was in the middle of the struggle to establish Edward Balliol upon the throne of Scotland, and the assistance which the French were giving to the Scottish patriots certainly formed one of the chief reasons for the new adventure. Edward's first idea was to form a great league of North German and Belgian feudatories, who were to supply troops for an attack on France in return for substantial subsidies. They accepted the subsidies, which necessitated heavy taxation in England; but they did not supply the troops. Edward himself took an army to Flanders, but could not bring the French to action; and the only important event of the first phase of the war was the sea-fight of Sluys (1340), in which an English fleet completely destroyed a large assemblage of French vessels. This may be described as the first great English naval victory, though the ships engaged were mainly merchant vessels. It gave to England the mastery of the Narrow Seas. But no other result followed; and having spent all his money without achieving anything, Edward was fain to make a truce and go home. He tried an invasion of Brittany in 1342, in support of a claimant to

the duchy, but again achieved nothing, and once more had to make a truce.

At length, in 1346, nine years after the beginning of the war, a real success was obtained. The French made an attack upon the English province of Guienne, whose governor, the Earl of Derby, was hard beset. In order to relieve him Edward formed an army of some thirty thousand men. It was an army unlike any other that had yet been seen in European warfare, for, while it included a large number of mailed knights, its main strength consisted of footmen, and above all of archers, whose value had been demonstrated in the Scottish wars. Instead of taking this army to Guienne, Edward landed at La Hogue, in Normandy, with the idea of marching northwards to Flanders.[1] But he found all the bridges over the Seine broken, and he had to go nearly as far as Paris before he found a bridge at Poissy. Meanwhile the French had gathered a huge host, mainly consisting of heavily armed feudal cavalry, but also including a number of Genoese crossbowmen and other auxiliaries. Pursued by this great army, Edward next found himself checked by the river Somme, which he only succeeded in crossing in the nick of time by a ford near its mouth. On the northern side he took station to fight, on some rising ground near Cressy. Here was fought, on August 26, 1346, the first of a series of famous battles which proved the superiority of a small force of highly-trained soldiers to overwhelmingly greater numbers of the old-fashioned feudal cavalry. In a fierce fight, in which the brunt was borne by the advance division of the English army commanded by the young Prince of Wales, the number of Frenchmen slain exceeded the total number of the English army. Among the fallen was the romantic knight-errant, the blind King John of Bohemia, who had come to fight for his ally the King of France. His crest, three ostrich feathers with the German motto *ich dien*, 'I serve,' was adopted in memory of the glorious day by the young Prince of Wales, and has been borne by every successive holder of that title.

The battle of Cressy at one blow raised the military prestige of the English to the highest pitch, and the simultaneous victory at Neville's Cross, in which King David of Scotland was taken captive, still further increased the glory. Away in the south the pressure on Guienne was at once relieved, and the Earl of Derby was able to begin raiding and plundering the French territory. Edward

[1] The route is shown in the Atlas, Plate 36 (*a*).

himself pushed on to Calais, which he besieged. The capture of this town, in 1347, gave to the English a secure hold over the Straits of Dover, an always open gateway for new attacks on France, and a continental market, under English control, for the sale of English goods. For that reason it was highly valued and jealously guarded for two hundred years to come. A permanent garrison was maintained; all inhabitants who would not swear to be loyal English subjects were expelled; and English colonists were brought to replace them.

It might have been expected that after such brilliant successes Edward would have pursued his campaign with the utmost vigour. Yet eight years passed before there was any serious fighting. The king was, indeed, short of resources; and both England and France during this interval were suffering terribly from the ravages of the appalling plague known as the Black Death, which reached England in 1348-1349. It swept away at least one-third of the population, and produced profound and incalculable effects upon the economic condition of the country.

In 1355, however, the war was renewed. The plan of campaign was that Edward should himself lead an expedition from Calais, and his son, the Black Prince, another from Bordeaux. The Calais expedition came to nothing, because Edward had to hurry home to deal with an invasion by the Scots, who now, as so often, came to the aid of their French allies. But the Black Prince conducted with a small army a murderous raid far into Southern France, burning and plundering in all directions, and destroying in seven weeks over five hundred villages and towns. Next year the Prince tried a repetition of his previous exploit, turning this time northwards. But he was intercepted by an enormously larger army, led by King John of France himself. Defeat seemed so certain that the Prince would have accepted any reasonable terms, but John would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender. Under these circumstances the battle of Poitiers was fought (1356). It resulted in an even more dazzling victory for the English than that of Cressy. The French king himself was taken prisoner and carried to England, where he shared the captivity of King David of Scotland until a vast ransom had been wrung out of unhappy France.

Victories won over impossible odds! Two kings in captivity, and two ravaged and devastated nations bled to raise ransoms for the restoration of their worthless

monarchs! These triumphs seemed, to the spirit of the fourteenth century chivalry, to represent the very culmination of glory. And undoubtedly they were received with enthusiasm in England. If the wars were very costly and led to burdensome taxation, there were compensations in the rich plunder which English soldiers brought home from the ruined towns of France. But what use was to be made of these brilliant victories? Neither Edward III. nor his gallant sons showed any desire to turn their successes to any statesmanlike ends. The miserable war went on in France. Even during a short period of truce the ravages and plunderings of the English soldiery never ceased. For they were now organised into bands of professional bravoes, known as Free Companies, and these roamed the country, pillaging and destroying at will.[1] The unspeakable misery of the French peasantry expressed itself in fierce insurrections, the risings of the 'Jacquerie,' while the mob of Paris took the law into their own hands. France seemed to be utterly ruined and undone. Yet her rulers steadily refused to yield up to the English any part of her soil. In 1360 Edward himself led a gigantic raid across the north of France and tried to capture Rheims, in order to be crowned there. But he had to fall back, because the devastations of his own army made it impossible to support himself. And at length, in May 1360, he accepted the treaty of Bretigny, whereby he abandoned his claim to the French crown, but was released from the obligation to do homage for his French dominions, which were increased by the cession of Calais and Ponthieu in the north, and by a great enlargement of his territories in the south.[2]

But the treaty of Bretigny did not end the war, as it was meant to do. The horrible Free Companies, which were entirely beyond Edward's control, continued to plunder and devastate the country, and their activity daily intensified the hatred of the French for the English. The nobles and knights of the ceded territories refused to submit to their transference to English rule, and broke into revolt. A national hero, the gallant du Guesclin, emerged to lead the national resistance against the English; and when the Black Prince undertook the adventure of restoring the iniquitous Pedro the Cruel to the throne of Castile, the French took the other side, and the old enemies met once

[1] A good impression of this aspect of the war is conveyed by Sir A. Conan Doyle's stirring tale, *The White Company*.

[2] See the map, Atlas, Plate 36 (*a*).

more, on Spanish soil, in the hard fight of Navarete (1367). It was another brilliant victory for the unconquerable hero. But it led to no result, except that to meet the cost of the expedition Guienne had to be heavily taxed, and became more and more discontented, until its people appealed to the King of France to come to their rescue.

This led to a new outbreak of war, the French violently attacking the English territories in the south (1369). But now the conditions were changed. England was weary of the war, while the French were fired with a new patriotism. Edward III. had grown old before his time, and was sunk in self-indulgence at home. The Black Prince was frail and ill: he summoned up his strength sufficiently to make a fierce attack on the revolting town of Limoges (1370), in which the whole population were put to the sword, except a few knights whom 'chivalry' demanded that he should treat with generosity. Next year he returned to England, broken and dying. Things had been going badly for the English even before his withdrawal; after it, they lost ground rapidly, and by 1374 England had lost all her possessions in France save Calais, Bordeaux and Bayonne, and a small district in the neighbourhood of the latter towns. To add to the humiliation, the Spaniards of Castile, driven into hostility by the English support of Pedro the Cruel, attacked the English fleet off La Rochelle in 1372, and completely destroyed it. Yet, though so much had been lost, the war still dragged on its weary length. Year after year expeditions were sent to France; they never reaped any material success. For half a generation the English Channel was unsafe for English ships, and the coasts of England were frequently attacked by French raiding bands. And when, at last, in 1396, Richard II. made a truce which marked the close of the first phase of the Anglo-French wars, England was left with no French possessions save Calais, Bordeaux and Bayonne.

After fifty-seven years of war, and a vast expenditure of blood and treasure, the English possessions in France were less than they had been at the beginning. Such were the results of war for the sake of glory.

[Tout, *History of England, 1216-1377*; Vickers, *England in the later Middle Ages*; Warburton, *Age of Edward III.* (Epochs of Modern History); Longman or Mackinnon, *Edward III.*; Oman, *Art of War in the Middle Ages*; Kitchen, *History of France*; Lodge, *The Later Middle Ages.*]

CHAPTER VI

CHANGING SOCIAL CONDITIONS

§ 1. *Changes in the Character of the Feudal Baronage.*

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and especially during the fourteenth, the conditions of life in most of the countries of Western Europe were rapidly changing. The feudal organisation of society was breaking down, or altering its forms; luxury was growing, and letters and the arts were reviving, especially in Italy; trade was becoming more active, and the influence of the classes which conducted it was rapidly increasing: everywhere the money-power counted for more, and in Flanders, Germany and Italy the thriving towns in which commerce and manufacture found their chief centres were able even to establish their political independence. But there was no country in which social change went on more rapidly during this period than in England; among the other peoples of the islands it was much slower and less potent. It is not possible to give precise dates to these changes, because they were mostly the result of a gradual and insensible process; but they were so transforming the character and life of the English people, and they exercised so profound an influence upon their future history and their institutions, that it is necessary to obtain as clear an idea of them as we can.

Perhaps we may begin by noting that London was becoming the political and social capital of the country. Until the thirteenth century, we may almost say that England had no capital, or fixed centre of government: the centre of government was wherever the king happened to be, and the king spent his time in travelling through the country. But now London, or rather Westminster, had become his most frequent place of residence. Even in his absence it was the seat of his Treasury and of other administrative offices. In Westminster the chief national law courts now held their sessions; and near by, in the Temple, which had been the headquarters of the Order of Knights of the Temple

until the order was suppressed in 1308, the new and very important profession of trained lawyers had taken up their abode and established their training schools. London had become the place to which men from all parts of the country resorted for their most important legal business. In London also were held most of the numerous Parliaments of the fourteenth century, which brought barons, knights and burgesses together from all parts of the country. It was London which most often saw the garish splendour of the court, the visits of ambassadors, the celebrations of great victories. Some of the leading nobles were now finding it necessary to keep permanent town houses in London, like the Savoy Palace of John of Gaunt; and their ostentatious display of their wealth added to the gaiety of the capital, and made it the social as well as the political centre of the whole country.

The nobles resorted to London mainly because it was there that they could play their part in national government. And here we come upon a marked feature of this age. The great nobles were as turbulent as ever, and as difficult to keep in order. But they had changed their aims. They no longer strove, like the feudal barons of an earlier period, to establish local independence, and to secure their uncontrolled jurisdiction over their tenantry, for the growth of the power of the royal law courts and the royal agents had enormously weakened their hold over their feudal inferiors, everywhere except in the Marcher lordships of Wales. Their aim now was to control or influence the national government. The numbers of the great nobles, the earls and barons who were entitled by hereditary right to be summoned to the King's Council, were steadily shrinking throughout this period. But on the other hand, their wealth, or the wealth of the greater among them, was as steadily increasing, through the union of many inheritances in the same family. By the deliberate policy of the Crown a large proportion of the great feudal estates had been acquired by members or connexions of the royal family, either through the grant to them of lapsed fiefs or through their marriage to great heiresses. Hence the English baronage was coming to consist of a comparatively small number of very rich and powerful nobles, whose lands were in many cases scattered over the whole kingdom, who were closely connected with the royal house and with one another, and who took a keen interest in the national government. They no longer based their influence mainly

upon their power to command the obedience of large numbers of feudal vassals, because they could no longer be sure of their obedience. But they increasingly expended a large proportion of their wealth in the maintenance of great bands of paid retainers, who wore their colours and 'liveries.' This practice became commoner owing to the French wars, for which they were encouraged to raise companies of soldiers who served under their banners; hence many of these retainers, even in times of peace, were experienced men-at-arms, who had learnt to fight, and to despise law and order, in France. Supported by these formidable bands, the greater nobles could wage private war, and were often tempted to override the laws of the land, or to defy the decisions of the courts. This was an ominous development, which was gradually taking shape during the fourteenth century, encouraged by the wars: it was the direct cause of the Wars of the Roses in the next century, which were neither more nor less than faction fights between groups of nobles, closely connected with the Crown, eager to establish their power over the national government, and supported by bands of armed retainers. But at least it was a good thing that they were no longer striving to split up the country into a multitude of semi-independent States. The new feudalism was just as disorderly as the old, but it accepted the national unity, and was in a sense patriotic.

The lower grades of the landed gentry were during this period rapidly increasing in number, wealth and importance. Owing to a unique and most fortunate peculiarity of English feudal law they were not sharply distinguished from the greater nobles. In other Western countries all the sons of a count were counts, and all the sons of a baron were barons: that is to say, the baronage was a hereditary caste. But by English custom only the eldest son of a baron ranked as a baron, and that only when he succeeded to his father; his younger brothers all sank at once to the rank of knights, so that the class of knights always included a large number of men who were closely connected with the nobility, and there was no cleavage of castes. Nor were the landed gentry divided among themselves. According to strict feudal rule, they included three distinct classes: those who held their land direct from the king, and who were described in Magna Carta as 'minor barons'; those who held their land from other barons on condition of military service, and who were knights proper; and those who held their land as freeholders. These distinctions had still survived in

the thirteenth century, but they had disappeared in the fourteenth, especially since Edward I. had laid down the rule that every holder of land to the value of £20 *per annum* was bound to assume the burden of knighthood. Thus the class of country gentry had become a very large one; and it was an extremely important class. Its influence was greatly increased by the wars; because the king, instead of trusting to the feudal levy, preferred to empower nobles or knights to raise companies of soldiers, for whom he paid, but whom they led: this produced a far more efficient fighting force. But one of its results was that a quite humble knight of small means might become a great captain in war; indeed the most trusted of Edward III.'s generals, like Sir Walter Manny and Sir John Chandos, were simple knights.

The knightly class was a good deal enriched by the plunder of France. It was still further enriched by the prosperity of English trade; because the backbone of this trade was wool, which was produced by the sheep on the knights' lands. And this had the happy effect of bringing the landed gentry and the traders into close relations with one another, and made it easy for them to work together, as we shall see them doing in the House of Commons. The importance of wool in early English history is commemorated by the fact that the Chairman of the House of Lords sits upon a woolsack. The woolsack might still more suitably have been introduced into the House of Commons, where knights and burgesses were united by woolly bonds. The growth in numbers, wealth and importance of the landed gentry is a very significant feature of this age; it explains why they were able to play the important part which we shall see them playing both in Parliament and in the sphere of local government.

§ 2. *Peasants and their Landlords: the Black Death.*

But far more important than these developments is the fact that during this age the mass of the English peasantry, who formed the great majority of the population, were passing from serfdom to freedom. The process was a very gradual one, and it was not completed till almost the end of the sixteenth century. But it was going on during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and very rapidly during the later part of this period. At the date of Magna Carta, in 1215, probably the majority of the English people

were serfs; that is, they were tied to the soil, and bound for life to render certain services, defined by custom, to their lords. In 1399 the great majority of the English people were free men, who could go where they would and change their employment; and the remainder were on the path to freedom.

This vital change was not due to any enactment or action of government, but was the result of the silent working of economic factors. In some degree it was helped by the wars; the thousands of stalwart young peasants who were enlisted for service in France naturally never returned to the state of serfdom. But far more important was the fact that landlords, great and small, increasingly wanted money: money to buy the luxuries introduced by growing trade; money to build the more pretentious houses they were beginning to erect; money to pay for their maintenance at court; money to provide their equipment for service in France; money to meet the cost of their bands of retainers. Now in the earlier system of land management money had played a very small part. A landlord's estate or 'manor' was usually divided into two parts: the one consisted of his 'demesne' or home-farm; the other of the holdings of his villeins or cottars, who paid for their land partly by working on the demesne so many days a week, and so many extra days in harvest, and partly by payments in kind—chickens, eggs, and so forth—at fixed seasons; so that very little money passed between landlord and tenant, and the landlord simply lived on the produce of his estates. So long as this system lasted, it was important that the villeins should be retained under control, because without them the estate could not be worked, and therefore the lord was not likely to let them or their children gain their freedom. But now that money, which could be spent anywhere, was more useful than produce, which had to be consumed on the spot or sent to market, the old system began to break up. Sometimes a landlord would agree with some of his villeins that they should pay him in money instead of in services, and the amount due would be calculated on the basis of the amount of service due, according to the ordinary rate of wages. If an arrangement of this kind was made permanent, the villein would become a *copyholder*, paying a customary rent that could not be altered in amount, the amount being fixed by the records of the manor; and as he could not be dispossessed so long as he paid his due rent, he became practically a free pro-

prietor. Or again, a lord might let his demesne or home-farm to a farmer at a fixed rent, leaving him to hire labourers as he thought fit. In that case the customary services due from the villeins would no longer be of any use to the lord, and he would commute them for money; moreover it would no longer matter to him whether they, or their children, stayed on the land or not. It must not be supposed that this kind of arrangement was universal, or that it was always even permanent: sometimes a lord would commute the weekly services of the villein, but retain the right to special services at harvest time; sometimes the arrangement would be only temporary, and the lord would reserve the right to return to the old system if he thought fit. But throughout this period a steadily increasing number of English peasants were either becoming 'copy-holders,' freely controlling their own little farms, or free labourers, able to move from place to place, and to accept whatever wages they could get. By the middle of the fourteenth century probably about one fourth of the peasantry had been thus gradually emancipated.

In 1348 and 1349 an event happened which rapidly accelerated this process, and at the same time produced a great conflict between the landlords and the peasants. The awful plague known as the Black Death struck England, and suddenly swept away between one-third and one-half of the population. This created a serious shortage of labour: there were not enough men to cultivate the land. The free labourers found themselves in clover: they could get almost what wages they asked for. On the other hand, the villeins or cottars who had not obtained their freedom felt it to be a great grievance that they should have to give their old services, and get no advantage at all; many of them ran away, even deserting their plots of land in order to get the high wages which were now obtainable. The landlords on their side were hard hit. They began to regret having commuted the services of so many of their villeins for money, and to try, wherever possible, to go back to the old system. They resented acutely the high rate of wages which they had to pay to the free labourers, or the escaped villeins from other estates. And, as they entirely controlled Parliament, they tried to force back the peasantry into their old dependent state by law. In the Ordinance of Labourers, 1349, which was frequently re-enacted and strengthened during the second half of the century, they tried to compel the half-emancipated peasants

to perform their old services; they also tried to enforce a maximum rate of wages for free labourers, imposing penalties on any labourer who accepted, and on any farmer who paid, more than a fixed rate, and they decreed that labourers should be compelled to work at these rates.

This legislation had some effect, because the execution of it was put in the hands of knights in each county, who were interested parties. But it was powerless to stop the movement, though the attempt aroused great bitterness and class enmity. After all, the peasants had the whip-hand, because their labour was indispensable; the landlords had to break their own law, in order to get their fields tilled. Besides, the growth of the woollen manufacture gave an alternative employment to many labourers; for it also was short of men, owing to the ravages of the plague. For more than a generation there raged a bitter conflict between the landholder and the peasant; and this formed the principal cause of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, in which, for the first time in the history of England, labouring men boldly repudiated the right of their masters to dictate the conditions of their work, and demanded that serfdom and forced labour should be altogether abolished in England. In this revolt the peasants won a momentary victory; but the concessions made to them were almost immediately withdrawn.

Nevertheless in the long run victory lay on the side of the peasants. Though in some cases the landlords were able to restore the old state of things, on the whole the troubles of the period made them more ready than ever to give up trying to farm their own demesnes, and to accept money payments instead of services. In the half century following the Black Death the proportion of free peasants to serfs seems to have been multiplied almost threefold, and the process went on steadily during the next century. Earlier than in any other country of Europe, the mass of the English people were ceasing to be serfs, and were becoming free men; the process was almost completed before the beginning of the great age of English history, at the end of the fifteenth century.

§ 3. *The Growth of Trade and Industry, and their Organisation.*

Almost as important as the change in the condition of the rural classes was the growth of English trade and industry which took place during this period. The foreign

trade of the country was rapidly increasing, because there was a greater demand for luxuries, while the most profitable and important of English exports, wool, was being produced in larger quantities. It was mainly to the great Flemish manufacturing towns, Ghent and Ypres, that English wool was exported: indeed, these towns were largely dependent upon the English supply, and this was the main reason for the very close relations which were maintained between the English government and the rulers of these towns. But English wool was valued everywhere. The duties payable on the export of it formed a very important item in the king's revenue, and for that reason the king was always anxious to keep a sharp control over it. Partly for that reason it was the policy of the government to insist that all the wool should be sold at fixed places, where the royal agents could see that the proper dues were paid. These places were known as 'staple' towns; sometimes they were fixed in England, sometimes abroad, and there was keen competition among various continental towns to have the 'staple' for English wool fixed among them. In the end Calais was chosen for this purpose, because, while convenient for foreign purchasers, it was under English control. English merchants made large profits by buying the wool from the growers to sell it at the 'staple.'

The bulk of English foreign trade was still in the hands of foreign merchants, who had their headquarters in London. During the fourteenth century the German traders of the Hanseatic League were at the height of their wealth and power, and they combined to maintain in London a great joint factory or warehouse known as the Steelyard, which was probably the most important trading centre in England. If the reader ever visits Bergen in Norway, he will find there, still preserved as a sort of museum, an old Hanseatic factory, which will give him a very clear idea of the sort of place the Steelyard must have been (on a greater scale) in its days of prosperity. Besides the Germans there were a number of Italian merchants in London, who did a great trade in the spices and other luxuries of the East, which were annually brought by fleets of Venetian ships. They also acted as bankers or moneylenders, and the name of Lombard Street, which is still the financial centre of London, is a reminder of the financial ascendency of the Lombard and other Italian traders. They frequently financed the king on a great scale, advancing money for his use pending the

payment of the taxes, and sometimes taking the crown jewels as a pledge for repayment. Without the aid of these Italian financiers, it is hard to see how the government could have been carried on in time of war. But the foreign merchants were exceedingly unpopular in London, especially the Italians. They were sometimes the victims of riotous attacks, for many Englishmen thought they were unduly favoured and had an unfair advantage over English traders.

Yet English merchants were showing themselves to be far more enterprising during this period than ever before. The English were beginning to be a trading and seafaring people; and London, the Cinque Ports (on the coast of Kent and Sussex),[1] Southampton, King's Lynn, Hull and other places were becoming busy seaports, which owned a sufficient amount of shipping to be able to transport the king's armies when required, or to provide him with a fleet such as that which won the battle of Sluys. There was not, and there could not be, any distinction between ships of commerce and ships of war; for there was no law or peace on the sea, and every trading vessel had to be ready to protect itself. It was in the fourteenth century that England began to become a considerable maritime and trading country; and the merchants who carried on this traffic, which had to face not only many dangers, but acute competition, especially from the Hanseatic League, needed to be men of much resolution and enterprise. For their mutual protection and assistance they formed themselves into a sort of loosely organised company or society, which was known as the Merchant Adventurers. It exercised a general control over English enterprises abroad, and was encouraged by a series of royal charters. The Merchant Adventurers carried on trade over a wide area, stretching from Spain to the Baltic Sea. There was thus coming into existence a small but important class of rich English merchants, increasingly able to hold their own against the foreign competitors who had hitherto controlled English markets.

Lastly it was in this period that England began to address herself seriously to the business of manufacture, and especially to the cultivation of the woollen industry; and it is one of the chief credits of Edward III. that he did his best to encourage this development, partly by protec-

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 34, where the Cinque Ports are specially marked.

tive devices, and partly by inviting Flemings to settle in England and teach the mysteries of their craft to Englishmen. The English woollen industry was as yet quite unimportant in comparison with that of Flanders, which long continued to use the greater part of the English wool-crop. But English cloths and worsteds were beginning to acquire a good reputation, and the trade in them was bringing a good deal of wealth into the districts where it chiefly throve, such as Norfolk, where the astonishing number of handsome village churches which still exist is due mainly to the generosity of the new class of prosperous clothiers of this period. England was thus beginning to be a manufacturing and commercial country on a considerable scale, and henceforth the merchants and the clothiers always count for a good deal in the life of the nation.

One of the most interesting features of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is the rise of what are known as Craft Gilds, or associations of the men engaged in various trades or industries. In the fourteenth century these craft gilds had become a most important feature of English society, and in all the larger towns there were many of them. Their objects were to protect the common interests of their members and of the trade in which they were engaged. They have sometimes been compared to modern trade unions, but there is no real resemblance between them ; for while trade unions are associations of employés in an industry, and have generally a common organisation for the whole country, the craft gilds were associations of master-workmen, and every town had its separate group of gilds. But they performed some of the services which the trade unions perform, providing assistance for their members when in trouble, and protecting them, so far as possible, against oppression. They also aimed at excluding all non-members from practising their trade in the town, and preventing unfair competition. They fixed the prices at which various types of goods should be sold, and endeavoured to secure good workmanship and uniformity of quality and size. They also made their own regulations regarding the conditions under which apprentices might be taken, and the number whom any member might take, and the wages of journeymen or hired workmen. Broadly speaking, their aim was to secure that an adequate livelihood was obtained by all their members, in return for honest work, and on the whole they were not unsuccessful, though they were often short-sighted, narrow-minded, and

unfair to non-members. The craft gilds frequently had to fight very hard against the older merchant gilds, which in most towns had obtained the control of borough government, and which were very jealous of allowing the regulation of any part of the trade of the town to pass out of their hands. But in most towns they were successful in establishing themselves, and they had become a valuable and important element in English life. While they continued in full vigour, and before they became too narrow and endangered the progress of industry, they made a notable contribution to the training of Englishmen in freedom, co-operation and self-government.

§ 4. *Intellectual Ferment: Wycliffe and the Church.*

One interesting activity of the gilds was that in some towns they formed the habit of organising pageants and simple little morality plays, which they performed, at intervals, on great occasions: some of the 'moralities' written for this purpose still survive, and very curious and interesting they are. This practice (which became more general during the next two centuries, and at which Shakespeare pokes fun in his account of the revels of Bottom and his friends in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) is especially interesting, because it shows that intellectual interests were no longer confined to the Church but had become very general. In the fourteenth century, for the first time in English history, it is true to say that the most interesting and important writing was the work not of churchmen, but of laymen. It was mainly laymen who, during this period, turned English into a literary language. Chaucer, the very great poet who in the second half of the fourteenth century was drawing the picture of English society in the most vivid and charming verse, and who was the first of the line of great English poets, was a layman, though Langland, the author of *Piers Plowman*, a very simple and moving portrayal of the sufferings of the poor, seems to have been a priest; and laymen were probably the authors of most of the numerous political satires in rhyming verse which were circulated during the period.

All this means that the national spirit, which was now so strong in England, was expressing itself in language and literature, as well as in politics and war. One of the interesting features of the period was the gradual establishment of English as the language of society and of the law courts

and of government, in place of Latin, which was supported by all the influence of the Church, and had hitherto been the language of learning, or of French, which had been the ordinary speech of the Norman baronage, and therefore the language of government. In 1362 English was for the first time used in the debates of the House of Commons, and in the same year it was ordained that English should be used in the law courts. The statutes and the rolls of Parliament continued to be written in bad Norman-French until the reign of Richard III. But this was only conservatism; even to-day we still retain a reminder of the days when French was the language of government, in the phrase *Le roy le veult*, which is used when the king's assent to an Act of Parliament is given, and that also is a proof of the extraordinary conservatism of the English in little things. But the outstanding fact is that the English language had become the language of the whole nation, and that it had been dignified and glorified, and had received a literary form, in the poetry of Chaucer. Chaucer may well count among the makers of the British Commonwealth, since he did so much to fix the noble and rich language which is one of the chief bonds that hold it together.

All over England, then, and in all classes of society, there was going on during this age an intellectual ferment which had a great effect upon the development of the nation. The people were awakening. They were beginning to discuss and reflect upon the way in which the nation was organised, and the way in which its organisation affected their own lives. And the more they reflected, the more dissatisfaction they felt. The rhyming satires, to which we have already alluded, are full of shrewd criticism of everything, of the burden of the wars, of the load of taxation, of the unfairness of landlords, of the idleness and luxury of monks and friars and churchmen generally. Both in these satires and in *Piers Plowman* there is a remarkably democratic note to be observed. In *Piers Plowman* a pilgrim of humble rank sees representatives of all classes of society pass before him: he finds vices and defects in them all; none can lead him in the right way; until the humble, honest labourer, Peter the ploughman, comes and shows that he, in his uncomplaining toil, has the secret of virtue.

Perhaps the bitterest and the most persistent of all these complaints were those which were directed against the Church, which was, indeed, in the fourteenth century,

rapidly losing its hold over the mind of the people, not in England only but throughout Western Europe. The popes, now at Avignon, were regarded as being mere agents of French policy; and their use of their power to fill English benefices with idle foreign clerics who drew their salaries but seldom troubled about their parishioners, led to a remarkable series of parliamentary enactments for the restriction of papal power, of which we shall have more to say. But it was not the papacy only, or chiefly, that was criticised. The Church at large had become worldly. The monks were often idle, vicious and luxurious. The begging friar, once so nobly self-sacrificing, had become a mere nuisance. The bishops were often mere courtiers and politicians. Many of the parish priests neglected all their duties except the collection of tithes and dues. And the wealth and luxury of churchmen were all the more bitterly resented, because in the midst of the struggle of the peasants against their landlords, and in the face of the burdensome taxation caused by the French wars, men were beginning to feel that it was the labouring men who had to bear all the burden.

A very powerful expression was given to all this discontent with the condition of the Church by John Wycliffe, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, and afterwards rector of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, who began to be prominent about 1360. He began by inveighing against the wealth and idleness of the monks and friars. He went on to urge that the Church would never be healthy until it ceased to be worldly, abandoned its wealth, and devoted itself to its true spiritual labours. In order to make religion real once more, Wycliffe translated the Bible into English for the first time. In order to give effect to his ideas, he founded an Order of Poor Priests, who were never officially recognised by the Church, but who rapidly spread over England, preaching and teaching; and the subversive doctrines which they taught contributed to the general political and social unrest. It has sometimes been said that they helped to produce the revolt of 1381. This is not strictly true, because the 'Poor Priests' of Wycliffe only began their work about the date of the revolt. But there were other agitators besides the followers of Wycliffe. John Ball, the socialist priest, who was one of the leaders in 1381, was not the only man of his kind at work. For his own political ends the most powerful of the English nobles, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, for a time gave

his protection to Wycliffe and the movement of which he was the head; and partly owing to his powerful patronage, partly because of the general discontent with the corruptions of the Church, the movement made very rapid headway. Long after John of Gaunt withdrew his patronage it was estimated that one-third of the population of England was under the influence of the Lollards, as Wycliffe's followers were called; nor was the movement wholly crushed out; it lasted on, underground, in spite of persecution, until it was merged in the Reformation movement of the sixteenth century.

Thus on all hands, and in all classes, English society was undergoing a very rapid transformation during this period. The national spirit was everywhere powerfully aroused, and everywhere a ferment of new ideas was at work. The great nobles, no longer dreaming of local independence, were beginning to strive, in rival factions, for the control of the national government. The country gentlemen were becoming richer and more important, and more ready to demand for themselves a share in national affairs. England was an increasingly rich and prosperous country, and her merchants were beginning to compete on equal terms with their foreign rivals. But the humbler classes also were for the first time stirring into life. The craftsmen in all trades were organising themselves to defend their common interests, and fighting against the ruling classes in the towns. The peasantry were struggling out of serfdom into freedom. Everywhere there was ferment and movement and change. Everywhere also this ferment was stimulated by the new feature of the rise of a popular literature. And everywhere there was growing turbulence and disorder, increased by the influence of the soldiers returning from the anarchic wars in France.

It is only when we have formed some idea of this general breaking up of the old order, and of the change in the relations of classes which it brought about, that we can appreciate the significance of the political history of the period, to which we must next turn.

[Lipson's *English Economic History*; Meredith's *Economic History*; Ashley's *Economic History*; Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*; Thorold Rogers' *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*; Hasbach's *The English Agricultural Labourer*; Trevelyan's *England in the Age of Wycliffe*; Poole's *Wycliffe* (Epochs of Church History); Ward's *Chaucer* (English Men of Letters); Jusserand's *English Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century*.]

CHAPTER VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH SELF-GOVERNMENT

(A.D. 1307-1422)

Edward II., 1307: Edward III., 1327: Richard II., 1377: Henry IV., 1399: Henry V., 1413.

THE fourteenth century was a period of the greatest importance in the development of the English system of government. During this century the form of Parliament was fixed, and its powers began to be extended and defined. During this century also the English system of local government was greatly developed. And as it has been the machinery of self-government which has formed the greatest contribution of England to the progress of civilisation, and which has been the main secret of the success of the English in planting daughter communities over the face of the globe, we shall not be equipped for the study of the great age of British history until we have grasped the significance of these events.

As we have already seen, Edward I. was the real creator of the English Parliament. But the Parliament which he organised was quite different from the Parliament which we know. It was an assembly of four distinct groups —the nobles, the clergy, and the 'communities' of shire and borough, represented by the knights and the burgesses. These four groups—which might have grown into something like the clearly marked 'Estates' of other countries —at first voted their grants to the Crown separately, but they often seem to have sat together in one assembly, which was simply an expansion of the old King's Council. And there was no clear definition of their powers. They were consulted about exceptional taxation. But the king did not think it always necessary to summon a full Parliament, and he certainly did not think it always necessary to consult the knights and burgesses about legislation or national policy. It was in the fourteenth century that this assembly, instead of developing into clearly marked 'Estates,' became a real 'Parliament' of two houses, Lords

and Commons; and that this Parliament secured the right of being consulted about all laws, of controlling nearly all taxation, and of exercising a general supervision over the government. The development of Parliament was very rapid throughout the century: indeed it was too rapid, because the nation was not yet sufficiently law-abiding to be ready for self-government, which demands a long and painful training. And the result of this over-rapid growth, forced on by the wars and the social changes of the age, was the anarchy and disorder of the following period.

§ 1. *Edward II. and Thomas of Lancaster.*

The dreary reign of Edward II. is chiefly important because it showed that England was as yet unready for self-government, and needed a strong and masterful king if peace and order were to be maintained. Edward II. was not an actively vicious man, but he was incapable of vigour or steadfastness, frivolous, sometimes childishly obstinate, and easily influenced. Partly through laziness, and partly because he wanted to be free of baronial control, he was apt to lean upon favourites. This gave a good ground of attack to the great barons, who had often shown their distaste for the masterfulness of Edward I., and who once more began to pursue the same policy that their predecessors had pursued in the reign of Henry III. But there was no Simon de Montfort among them. Their principal leader was Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, the king's cousin, and the richest noble in the realm. Although Lancaster was revered by the common people after his death as a sort of martyr to liberty, there seems to have been no ground for this reputation except the fact that he opposed the government; he was quite selfish, and just as incompetent as the king.

Lancaster and his friends first demanded the exile of the king's favourite, Piers Gaveston, an impudent, witty and irresponsible young knight of Gascony; and as Gaveston was a foreigner, and the country was certainly ill-governed during the period of his influence, their demand received much popular support. Three times banished, Gaveston three times returned, and in the end he was brutally murdered by Lancaster's chief supporter, the Earl of Warwick (1312). Meanwhile (1310) the barons, imitating their predecessors of Henry III.'s reign, had appointed a committee of twenty-one, known as the Lords Ordainers, who were empowered (like the committee of 1258) to draw up a scheme

of reform, and meanwhile to conduct the government of the country. We need not stop to examine the Ordinances which this committee issued in 1311, because they never really came into operation. Their chief provisions were that Parliament was to meet at least once a year, and that it should have the right of approving or dismissing the great officers of state; but as the Parliament which they had in mind was a purely, or at any rate a predominantly, baronial body, the scheme meant no more than the overriding of the royal authority by an oligarchical group, and it would have brought no improvement.

The prolonged disputes about Gaveston and the Ordinances prevented any effective interference in Scottish affairs, and gave Robert Bruce time to conquer the whole of Scotland. When Edward II. did at length endeavour to regain the lost kingdom, in the campaign of Bannockburn, Lancaster and his chief followers significantly stood aloof; and it was suspected that they were in traitorous relations with the Scots, as they certainly were at a later date. The half dozen years following the issue of the Ordinances were perhaps the most wretched period of this unhappy reign. Neither the king nor Lancaster's party was strong enough to get effective mastery, or showed any capacity for statesmanship. In 1318 Edward II. was at last compelled to accept the Ordinances. But his cause soon began to revive. He found in the Despensers, father and son, two new 'favourites' or ministers who were men of real ability, and who were also English barons. In 1322 Lancaster was defeated and taken prisoner at Boroughbridge, and was put to death as a traitor.

After Boroughbridge Edward's first action was to have the Ordinances rescinded at a Parliament which met at York (1322). They were declared to be invalid on the significant ground that they had been made by the barons alone without consulting the knights and burgesses; and it was laid down, in a very important statute, that no laws concerning the estate of the king or of the realm were valid unless they had been approved by the prelates and barons and by the *commonalty of the realm*. Thus was for the first time declared the necessity of the concurrence of Parliament as a whole in legislation.

Even after the defeat of Lancaster, Edward II.'s government was little more efficient than before. His unhappy reign was ended by a conspiracy led by his queen and her favourite, Roger Mortimer, who, after defeating and

capturing the king, had him formally deposed by Parliament, and his young son Edward III. crowned in his stead. Parliament was in this doubtless acting merely as the instrument of the dominant faction; but it was a remarkable addition that was made to its power when it was invited actually to depose a king on the ground of misgovernment. Thus the miserable reign of Edward II. in two ways led to a great expansion of the authority of Parliament; and this, along with the practical establishment of the independence of Scotland, forms its chief importance.

§ 2. *Edward III. and the Growth of Parliamentary Power.*

The first five years of the reign of Edward III., during which power remained in the hands of Isabella and Mortimer, were as disturbed as the previous reign had been. But when in 1332 the young king overthrew Mortimer, and took the direction of affairs into his own hands, a very important new period began. It was important not only or chiefly because of the wars with Scotland and France by which it was filled, but still more because of the rapid development of Parliament which it saw.

Almost at the opening of the period Parliament appeared in the form which it was to retain throughout its history, divided into the two houses, of Lords and Commons; who in 1332 and thereafter met in two separate chambers.

What might have become the Estate of the Clergy had silently dropped out. The clergy had their own Convocation, and they preferred to vote the supplies required from them in that assembly, instead of joining in the national Parliament: though they long continued to be formally summoned to send their representatives, they never did so. And in the course of time their vote of supplies became also a mere formality automatically following that of Parliament. They had thus failed to establish their position as a separate estate. How nearly they had done so is shown by the fact that even to-day no clergyman of the Church of England may be elected a member of the House of Commons.

What might have become the Estate of the Nobles had now definitely become the House of Lords. Its members consisted of those who had a hereditary or official right to a writ of summons to the King's Council. But it also included the bishops and greater abbots, who, in a strict system of estates, would have belonged to the estate of the

clergy. Formerly the king had exercised some freedom of choice as to whom he could summon, at any rate among the less important barons, and a baron who had lost his lands would cease to receive a writ. Now the right had become more strictly hereditary; and if the king summoned a new baron custom dictated that he would have to go on summoning his heirs. The membership of the House of Lords was therefore becoming clearly defined. It could only be increased by the creation of a new hereditary right by the king; it could only be diminished by the extinction of a noble family.

Finally, the knights and burgesses were now definitely grouped together as the House of Commons. They might easily have developed, and very nearly did develop, into two separate estates, sitting in different houses, as happened in some other countries. It was a very fortunate thing that they were combined, because this ensured the strength and influence of the House of Commons. The chief reasons why knights and burgesses so easily fell into their places, side by side in a single chamber, were firstly that they had been in the habit of working together in the shire court, and secondly that they were closely united by their common interest in the wool trade, and in the heavy duties which were imposed upon it. Between them, the knights, who represented not merely the landed gentry but the whole communities of the shire, and the burgesses, who represented the numerous little trading boroughs, could in a real sense speak for the whole English nation; and it was an extraordinary piece of good fortune for England that its House of Commons should have taken this form. Elsewhere (as in France) the minor nobles joined with the greater nobles, or (as in Aragon) formed a separate estate. Only in England did there grow up a single assembly which stood for the nation as a whole.

During the first period of Edward III.'s reign (1332-1370), when he was winning great glory in the French wars, the powers of Parliament (including both the Lords and Commons) steadily increased, and were more clearly defined. This was because, in time of war, it was impossible for the king to 'live of his own,' as mediæval kings were expected to do, and he had to ask for special grants. Parliament seized the opportunity to attach conditions to its grants, and so to enlarge its power. Parliamentary grants usually took the form of a sort of rough income-tax, one-tenth of the revenue of townsmen, and one-fifteenth of the revenue of rural landholders; but as it was impossible to make a fresh estimate

of everybody's income every time a grant was made, the tenth and fifteenth early became stereotyped at a fixed sum of £39,000, each shire or town always paying the same amount. Sometimes Parliament also made a grant of a tax additional to the customary rate on wool, or other commodities. But in this sphere the king had a way of trying to go behind Parliament by making private bargains with the exporters of wool. In 1362 this was stopped by a statute which provided that neither merchants, nor anybody else but Parliament, had any right to grant such taxes; and thenceforward Parliament effectively controlled the customs duties as well as the direct taxes. Again, the king sometimes levied special feudal dues like scutage, or old customary taxes like 'tallage,' which earlier kings had always claimed the right to levy from towns. But in 1340 another statute, obtained as a condition of grants which the king desperately needed, laid it down that 'no charge or aid should be imposed on the nation except by common consent' of both Houses of Parliament.

Both Houses took an equal share in making these grants; it was not until the end of the century (1395), that the House of Commons was recognised as having a preponderant share in taxation. But at least this much is clear, that Parliament as a whole was acquiring a real control over all ordinary taxation; though the king's regular revenue was still large enough to keep the government going without taxation in times of peace, if it was economically managed. Parliament was also in this period beginning to claim some oversight over the expenditure of the money which it voted: it insisted repeatedly upon knowing what it was wanted for, and on several occasions, as in 1341, it demanded an audit of accounts to make sure that the money had been spent for the purposes for which it was given.

In regard to the making of laws, the power of Parliament was not yet fully developed. According to the statute of 1322, no laws could be made without the approval of both Houses of Parliament, but it was still the king and his officials who actually drew up the laws. The most that the House of Commons could do was to petition the king to make a law on such and such a subject, and to make their grants of money conditional upon his doing so. The king would give his promise; and the desired law would be embodied in a statute drawn up by the king's officers at the end of the session of Parliament. This was not quite satisfactory; the royal statute did not always correspond

with the intentions of Parliament. Nevertheless the influence, not only of Parliament as a whole but of the House of Commons, upon legislation was very great during this period. The influence of the burgesses largely accounts for the great activity of Edward III. in enacting laws for the protection and encouragement of English trade and industry, which formed the most creditable feature of his reign. The influence of the knights is to be seen in the successive Statutes of Labourers, by which it was attempted to bring back the escaping peasantry into their old dependence. For it must be remembered that even the House of Commons was an aristocratic body governed by the interests of the powerful middle classes of country gentlemen and traders.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the action of Parliament during these years was its steady resistance to papal claims and exactions, which were arousing a growing resentment throughout England. The papacy was, in fact, making more vexatious financial claims than it had done even when its spiritual influence was highest; but the main reason for this anti-papal policy of king and Parliament is to be found in the growing national feeling of the English, who did not see why English money should be drained out of England, even at the will of the Pope. In 1366 Parliament flatly refused to go on paying the tribute which had been demanded ever since King John became the Pope's vassal. In 1351 their petitions produced the first Statute of Provisors, to prevent the Pope from 'providing' English benefices for foreign clerics. In 1353 they obtained the first Statute of Præmunire, whose object was to limit appeals to Rome and the introduction of papal bulls into England. All this shows that the national Parliament was jealous to secure what it regarded as the national freedom from 'foreign' interferences; and that they shared the general dissatisfaction with the state of the Church which caused the Wycliffite movement to be so widely welcomed.

§ 3. *The Invention of Impeachment: the Justices of the Peace.*

The last ten or twelve years of Edward III. were years of gloom and of growing discontent. The war was going badly; from 1370 onwards the French were rapidly reconquering the English acquisitions. The burden of taxation was as heavy as ever, but it was not lightened by victory.

The deep discontent of the peasantry, which was to break out in the revolt of 1381, was growing daily. The king had grown old before his time, and gave himself wholly to mean pleasures. His eldest son, the Black Prince, was gravely ill, and died in 1376; and the reins were seized by the king's fourth son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who was the richest noble in England, having acquired by marriage all the lands of the house of Lancaster. His dependents filled and often misused the great offices of state. Although John of Gaunt tried to win support by attacking the Church and protecting Wycliffe, he was very unpopular. It was widely believed that he was aiming at the throne; though, even if the Black Prince and his young son should die, there was a nearer heir in the Earl of March, who was descended from the king's third son.

It was in these circumstances that the House of Commons entered upon a bolder line of action than any they had yet attempted. In 1376, the 'Good Parliament,' led by the Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir Peter de la Mare, challenged the abuses of the government, and laid formal charges against two officials, adherents of John of Gaunt, before the House of Lords, as the supreme law court of the realm. This was the first use of the process called 'impeachment,' whereby the House of Commons, acting as the guardian of the nation, prosecutes dangerous officials of state before the House of Lords. When the House of Lords received these charges, and tried and condemned the two ministers, the great weapon of 'impeachment,' which was to be a very important means of securing control over the government, was definitely forged, and placed in the armoury of the House of Commons. The Good Parliament also drew up an elaborate scheme of reforms, much to the indignation of John of Gaunt. 'What do these base and ignoble knights attempt?' he is reported to have exclaimed. 'Do they think they are kings or princes of the land?'

The actual work of the Good Parliament did not last long. In the next year, 1377, another Parliament reversed all its decisions, and John of Gaunt's power seemed as firmly established as ever. This sudden change of attitude on the part of Parliament is at first sight bewildering. It becomes intelligible when we learn that the Speaker of the House of Commons in 1377 was actually John of Gaunt's steward, and that Sir Peter de le Mare, the Speaker of the Good Parliament, was the steward of the Earl of March. This suggests that the growing power of Parliament was being

used by the rival court factions of great nobles, and that these factions had learned how to influence the elections. The knights and the burgesses, though they understood their own interests, scarcely possessed either the knowledge or the courage necessary to enable them to hold their own against the factions of the great nobles. Because the great nobles were learning that they could get control over Parliament and use it for their own purposes, they were not as jealous of the growth of the power of the House of Commons as might have been expected. But for the same reason, the rapid development of a nominal parliamentary supremacy did nothing to ward off the disorder which was threatening England, but on the contrary increased the danger. This was already clear in the reign of Edward III.; it became clearer still under Richard II. and the kings of the House of Lancaster. The powers of Parliament and especially of the House of Commons were growing more rapidly than the capacity of its members to use them, and anarchy was the result. Nevertheless the working out of the form and powers of Parliament which marked this period was a very great gift to the future. The time was to come when they would be rightly used.

But if even the knights or country gentlemen (not to speak of the burgesses) were not yet able to use wisely their powers as members of Parliament, there was one sphere in which they had been long practised, and had learnt to do good work—the sphere of local government. Since the time of Henry II. the knights had been more and more employed by the king in the work of the shire courts. Edward I. had required the shire courts to elect knights who were to act as conservators of the peace. From 1327 onwards these 'constables on a large scale,' as they have been called, were nominated by the king, a group of them for each shire. They were soon entrusted with minor judicial functions. And in 1360 a statute laid it down that henceforth there should be in every shire 'a lord and three or four of the most worthy,' to act as justices of the peace, with power to arrest, examine and punish disturbers of the peace, or to commit them to prison for trial before the king's travelling judges. For most purposes these groups of Justices of the Peace, nominated by the king from among the leading gentry of the country, henceforward took the place of the sheriff and his shire court; and in course of time fresh functions were

heaped upon them, until they came to be the chief representatives of the national government in their own districts. They were paid no salary; and although they were royal agents, nominated by the king, they were also, as the leading gentry of their neighbourhoods, in close touch with the needs and opinions of the districts they had to rule. For that reason their rule was in a real sense 'self-government' by the natural leaders of each county; and these justices remained, for six centuries to come, one of the most distinctive and valuable of English institutions. In other countries, as in France, the work which the English justices did came to be done by paid experts, sent down to the provinces by the royal government; no doubt such experts were often more efficient, but they were also far more dependent upon the king, and far more easily turned into the tools of despotism. English kings henceforth had to work through unpaid and therefore independent local gentlemen, not through paid professional administrators; and this made it very difficult for them to establish a really despotic power, however much they might desire it. Moreover the establishment of this system meant that a large number of the men from among whom the members of Parliament were drawn had enjoyed a wide and varied experience in actual administrative work; and this made English Parliaments practical and businesslike bodies, which knew what they were talking about. Thus the establishment of the Justices of the Peace was to prove an extremely important event in the development of the English system of government, though it took place very quietly and almost unnoticed.

§ 4. *Parliamentary Supremacy and the Revolt of the Peasants.*

If a vigorous prince in the prime of life had succeeded Edward III., it is likely that the remarkable powers which had been won by Parliament during Edward's reign could have been successfully challenged. But the new king was a boy of ten. His accession caused the fall of John of Gaunt from power; and the affairs of the kingdom were managed by a Council of Regency, which could not afford to disregard Parliament; all the more because the French war was going disastrously, and hostile French fleets controlled the Channel and even raided Sussex and the Isle of Wight. These failures discredited the government;

and as they were compelled to ask for large grants of money, they had to give way when Parliament demanded a remodelling of the Council itself, and even claimed that the Chancellor, Treasurer and other great officers of state should be in future appointed in Parliament. A little later Parliament actually deposed the whole of the Council and all the officers of state. This assertion of direct control over the executive government represents the highest point in the growth of the power of Parliament. It could not be permanently maintained; and though it provided precedents for the future, its results were far from satisfactory.

For parliamentary supremacy did not bring success. The war continued to present, year after year, an unrelieved series of failures. And it was in the period of parliamentary supremacy that the terrifying revolt of the peasants broke out in 1381: it was, indeed, immediately due to a new method of taxation invented by the omnipotent Parliament of these years to meet the cost of the war. This new impost was a poll-tax, to be paid by every man and woman over the age of fifteen. First levied in 1377, it was repeated in 1380 on a severer scale. It was levied on a basis which made the burden on the poor man far heavier in proportion than the burden on the rich man.

But although this unfair tax, and the severity with which it was enforced, formed the immediate cause of the rising, behind it lay an accumulation of grievances. There were the grievances of the peasants against the Statutes of Labourers, which Parliament was perpetually making more severe; the peasants demanded the total abolition of villeinage. There were the grievances of the humbler classes in the towns, who found themselves in most cases excluded from equal rights by the oligarchies of substantial merchants who had begun to monopolise the government of most English boroughs. And perhaps above all there was a widespread indignation against the waste and luxury, the pride and injustice, of the ruling classes, great nobles and great churchmen alike. This feeling had expressed itself in a remarkable current of extreme democratic sentiment, which may have been to some extent fostered by the teaching of Wycliffe. But it was still more formidably expressed by the passionate denunciation of the mad priest of Kent, John Ball, who had been at work long before the Wycliffite movement became important. 'Things will never go well in England,' the mad priest asserted, 'so long as goods be not in common and so long as there be villeins and gentle-

men. By what right are they whom we call lords greater than we? If all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they prove they are better than we? They are clad in velvet, and warm in their furs, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fine bread, and we have oat-cakes, and water to drink. And yet it is by our toil that they hold their state.' The whole of this spirit of defiance of the existing social order was summed up in the famous distich which John Ball used as his text when he preached to the rebels on Blackheath: 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?'

It was the revolt of the disinherited, of the men who had always hitherto submitted humbly while kings and great lords fought over their heads, and whose function in the State had been to labour and suffer and bear the ultimate burden of misrule. They had no share in the growing power of Parliament, and if they had had it they would not yet have known how to use it. But they were slowly emerging into freedom, and therefore becoming less submissive; and although a violent outbreak of this kind seldom or never leads to good results, it was a good thing that the mass of English people should be stirring into life, and demanding the means of a freer and nobler existence.

The revolt began in Kent and Essex, and it was the men of these counties who marched on London under the lead of an ex-soldier, Wat Tyler, and the enthusiastic priest, John Ball. But because the whole country was ripe for revolution the rising spread like fire among the heather, northwards as far as Scarborough and westwards as far as Winchester, rioters everywhere burning manor-houses, destroying the records of villein-services, and terrorising the magnates of the little towns. The men of Kent under Wat Tyler organised themselves with remarkable skill, and made themselves masters of London; and, while the king and his ministers took refuge in the Tower, they burned the archbishop's palace at Lambeth, and John of Gaunt's great mansion of the Savoy, and the Temple, where the hated lawyers lived, and the houses of many of the foreign merchants. At first the government was as much taken aback as a shepherd faced by a sudden rebellion of his flock. The young king, however, with admirable pluck, met the rebel host at Mile End, and, by promising everything they asked, persuaded the more well-disposed to disperse. But a great number of the more reckless remained

in control of London, plundering and murdering; and these were only disbanded by another plucky venture of the boy king. Meanwhile forces of resistance had been collected, and the suppression of the rising began. There was fighting in some districts, followed by a number of executions; but before the end of the year the revolt had been completely subdued. On the whole, considering the panic which the rising must have created, the rebels were not very severely dealt with according to the standard of that age, and in December an amnesty was granted to all who had taken part.

The king's promises, by means of which the rebel host had been broken up, were never fulfilled; they had perhaps never been intended as anything but a *ruse de guerre*, and although the government suggested to Parliament that villeinage might be abolished, the nobles and the knights flatly refused to consider the suggestion, saying that their villeins were their own property, of which no one had a right to rob them. The great revolt seemed to have failed utterly, and indeed it did nothing or little to accelerate the emancipation of the peasants, except perhaps by persuading some landlords to seize favourable opportunities of escaping from the troublesome business of dealing with fractious villeins. Nevertheless the movement towards emancipation went on steadily; it was almost completed by the end of the next century.

§ 5. *Reaction and Revolution.*

During the years following the great revolt the young king, having proved his courage, began to take a more active share in the government: he was now fifteen years old, and married. He tried to free himself from the control of Parliament, dismissing the ministers whom Parliament had appointed, and taking others of his choice, who were of course described as favourites. One of them, Michael de la Pole, was the son of a merchant of Hull, who had given long service to Edward III. in war and government, and who now rose to the rank of Earl of Suffolk—an interesting example of the way in which the baronage was being recruited from below. His policy was the restoration of the royal authority, as the only means of restoring order, and he also wished to bring to an end the dreary and profitless war with France. With him was linked a young noble of the most ancient Norman descent, Vere, Earl of Oxford;

and the aims of this new royal party seemed to be made easier to achieve when John of Gaunt went off to Spain on a wild-goose chase to claim for himself the throne of Castile.

But John of Gaunt's place as opposition leader was taken by his younger brother, the Duke of Gloucester, who, supported by barons and Parliament, started a violent campaign against Suffolk. The Commons declared that no grants should be made until Suffolk was dismissed. The hot-tempered young king angrily replied that he would not remove the meanest scullion in his kitchen at their bidding. Nevertheless he was forced to dismiss Suffolk (1386), who was promptly impeached and imprisoned. Gloucester then proceeded to the old device of the barons, the appointment of a committee of reform. Richard determined to resist, and instructed Vere to raise troops. But the attempt at a *coup d'état* was rendered hopeless when Vere was defeated at Radcot Bridge, on the Thames (1387), and the Gloucester party remained triumphant. Five of them (known as the Lords Appellant) brought charges of treason against Richard's principal advisers; and in 1388 a shamelessly packed Parliament was summoned, which earned the name of the 'Merciless Parliament,' by carrying out a series of judicial murders by which they got rid of nearly all Gloucester's leading opponents. Even clerks and under-sheriffs were not spared; and the king's old tutor, the gallant old knight, Sir Simon Burley, who had been a companion-in-arms of the Black Prince, was beheaded. The victorious faction proceeded to divide the spoils of office among themselves, and, although their loudest complaints had been of the waste of public money, they actually got their obedient Parliament to vote £20,000 as a testimonial to the five Lords Appellant.

In a sense this struggle established still more clearly the authority of Parliament, but it also showed how easily Parliament could be turned into a tool of baronial ambition. Richard II. had to submit for the moment. But he never forgot the humiliation to which he had been subjected; and his mercurial spirit soon rose again. In the very next year, 1389, he announced that he proposed himself to resume the control of government; and the Gloucester faction, discredited by their own ferocity and greed, did not venture to resist. Moreover John of Gaunt had come back, and, whatever his faults, he was a better man than Gloucester.

During the next eight years Richard ruled with a good deal of success, and with remarkable moderation. He took no steps against his enemies, but nursed his resentments in secret. He succeeded at last in bringing the dreary French war to a close, by a truce in 1389, which was succeeded by a peace in 1396. He professed to be willing to rule in conjunction with Parliament, and acted up to his professions. He even allowed his great officers to resign formally (1390), in order that Parliament might review their conduct; and, although the Commons continued to make complaints, there was no sharp friction. A working system of limited monarchy seemed to have been established. But the great danger still remained: the richer barons were still surrounded by great bands of paid and liveried retainers, who formed a constant menace to the peace of the realm. More than once the Commons petitioned that this practice should be forbidden by law, but government was not strong enough to carry out such a policy. Limited monarchy overshadowed by an armed baronage could only have a precarious existence.

The chief interest of these years is to be found in the growing strength of the Wycliffite movement, and in the increasing hostility of the nation to the political power of the papacy. In the earlier part of his career Wycliffe had been content to declaim against the luxury of the Church, and in this he had the sympathy of the greater part of the nation. But in 1379 or 1380 he had become an open heretic, rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation; and it was about the same time that he began the translation of the Bible into English and sent forth his 'poor priests.' The politicians now withdrew their patronage from him. The orthodox churchmen began to clamour for the suppression of heresy, and in 1382 Wycliffe's doctrines were formally proscribed by Parliament. Yet, to the disgust of the more active bishops, there was no serious persecution of the Wycliffites. The University of Oxford was full of them. Several nobles and many influential knights advocated their cause; and they were strong even at court, where Richard's dearly loved queen, Anne of Bohemia, was apparently friendly to them. It was through her followers that the doctrines of Wycliffe reached Bohemia, where they profoundly influenced the preaching of Huss, and helped to produce the great Bohemian revolution of the early fifteenth century. The Lollards (as they began to be called) were increasing rapidly in number, and it was

during these years that Wycliffe's 'poor priests' were spreading all over England. In Parliament a group of Wycliffite knights demanded (1395) the immediate reformation of the Church, and the confiscation of Church lands for the needs of the State was frequently urged. Parliament as a whole was far from sharing Wycliffite opinions. But it was more resolute than ever to free the English Church from the control of the papacy in all respects except doctrine. In 1393 it obtained the enactment of the final Statute of Præmunire, which imposed the penalties of outlawry, forfeiture and imprisonment on any man who should obtain or publish any papal bull or other instrument from Rome. In short, it seemed in these years as if the Reformation of the sixteenth century was going to be anticipated. Naturally the bishops and clergy were seriously alarmed; and they were gradually alienated from the king by the fact that he took no vigorous steps to crush out this dangerous movement.

In 1397 Richard II. at last decided that the moment had come to carry out the design which had been frustrated in 1386-1388, but which he had never abandoned, in spite of all his seeming moderation—the design of throwing off baronial and parliamentary control, and re-establishing the authority of the Crown. He had made friends with some of his old opponents, notably his cousin Henry, son of John of Gaunt. Gloucester and his leading supporters were suddenly arrested. Gloucester was persuaded to make a confession, and then murdered. His supporters, by a grim reproduction of their own methods ten years before, were 'appealed' of high treason, and, though they were formally pardoned, one of them was executed. An obsequious Parliament, 'packed' by the king as the Merciless Parliament had been 'packed' by Gloucester, obediently carried out all the king's behests, voted large taxes for the period of the king's life, and actually consented to delegate almost all its own powers to a committee composed of the king's friends. Thus not only was the dangerous baronial faction crushed, but Parliament, which had been so often used as its tool, was suspended. A quarrel between Henry of Derby and the Duke of Norfolk, the only remaining members of the group of Lords Appellant, gave Richard a pretext for banishing them both; and when John of Gaunt died in 1399 Richard seized all his lands, instead of allowing the exiled Henry to inherit.

If Richard had used his suddenly acquired mastery wisely, it is not impossible that he might have established a lasting despotic system, which would have seemed to be justified by the need of guarding against baronial ambitions, and which would probably have enjoyed a good deal of popular support. For, after the events of 1381, Parliament must have appeared to many elements in the nation a purely class assembly governed by class interests. It might reasonably have been thought that there was more chance of justice under a despotic king than under such a body; and on this ground the advance that had been made towards a system of national co-operation in government might have been sacrificed. But, perhaps fortunately, Richard abused his power in such a way as to arouse widespread discontent. He could only count upon some of the lesser nobles whom he had himself exalted and enriched. The most powerful families, with their great bands of retainers, were nearly all hostile. The knights were alarmed by the practical suppression of Parliament, and they controlled the machinery of local government. The great churchmen were alienated by Richard's lukewarmness in the suppression of Lollardy.

In 1399 the exiled Henry (now Duke of Lancaster) seized the occasion of Richard's absence in Ireland, and landed on the coast of Yorkshire. He was quickly joined by great forces, and especially by the northern barons; the greater part of the country readily submitted to the invader, and on his hurried return Richard found all resistance hopeless, surrendered to his triumphant cousin, and agreed to abdicate. Meanwhile a Parliament had been summoned; with practical unanimity it declared Richard II. deposed, and, although the nearest heir to the throne was the young Earl of March, accepted Henry of Lancaster as king.

This was the second occasion within a hundred years on which a king had been deposed by the authority of Parliament. But in 1327 an unquestionable successor had been at hand. In 1399 the new king was not the direct heir, and owed the validity of his title to parliamentary enactment. For that reason he and his next two successors were dependent upon Parliament to an extent hitherto unknown. In 1398 it had seemed quite likely that Parliament would decline from the predominant position it had won during the previous century; in 1399 it had become more powerful than ever. That is one of the main aspects of the revolution of 1399. But there were others also. Henry IV. owed

his throne in actual fact rather to the armed bands of the great nobles, which were strong enough to overpower the royal army, than to the mere decree of Parliament, and this was an ominous fact. He owed his success also in part to orthodox bishops of the Church, and they too had to be paid for their services.

§ 6. *The Lancastrian Experiment of Limited Monarchy.*

The character of the reign of Henry IV. was determined by the circumstances of his accession. Because his title was insecure, he had to combat a continual succession of revolts and plots during the first nine years of his reign. The most remarkable of these was a great national rising in Wales, the hero of which was a Welsh gentleman, Owen Glendower. He began to be troublesome at the opening of the reign. He was complete master of Wales from 1401 to 1406. A long series of annual campaigns had to be directed against him, in which the Prince of Wales, afterwards Henry V., had his apprenticeship to war. But Owen was a brilliant leader, and held his own staunchly. His power was not really broken until 1409; even after that, he held out as an outlaw among the mountains for several years, and died unsubdued in 1415. Even more serious was the rebellion of the Percies of Northumberland, who had been Henry IV.'s warmest allies in 1399, but were dissatisfied with their rewards. Led by the reckless Hotspur, they tried to make a junction with Owen Glendower, but were defeated after a hard-fought battle at Shrewsbury in 1403; but Hotspur's father long continued to be troublesome.

These long struggles showed how dangerous was the military strength which the greatest nobles derived from their bands of armed retainers. But Henry IV. was a solid, hard-working and capable prince; and by 1409 he seemed to have overcome every danger, and to have seated his dynasty securely on the throne.

His alliance with the Church committed him to a reversal of the tolerant policy which Richard II. had pursued towards the Wycliffites, and for the first time in her history England experienced a period of religious persecution. On the demand of Convocation, the statute *de hæretico comburendo*, which imposed the penalty of death by burning for heresy, was adopted; and no objection was made by Parliament. But Henry IV. was a persecutor for political reasons, not from fanaticism. Few Lollards were burnt in his reign;

it was under the rule of his cruel-hearted son, Henry V., that the persecution became really severe.

The main feature of the reign, however, was the remarkable fulness with which the supremacy of Parliament was established. Not only did Henry IV. owe his crown to Parliament; he had been compelled to alienate so many of the crown-lands to reward the nobles who had supported him, that his non-parliamentary revenue was greatly reduced, and as he was constantly engaged in war he had to depend upon Parliament for regular grants. These were pretty freely given, but they were accompanied by hard conditions. The Commons established the vitally important principle that 'redress of grievances must precede supply.' They insisted upon appointing their own treasurers to see that the money was properly spent; and they drastically reduced the king's household and cut down his personal expenditure. They frequently urged that the king should confiscate Church lands to meet his needs—a step which he could not take without alienating his clerical supporters. They appointed inquisitorial commissions to investigate the details of expenditure. They criticised his policy with the most uncompromising frankness. They kept a close control over the royal Council, which was as fully dependent upon Parliament, during the greater part of the reign, as it had been in the earlier years of Richard II.; and the king was expressly forbidden to take any step without the approval of his Council. This practically meant that the king ceased to be the independent head of the executive, which passed to a sort of ministry dependent upon Parliament. Such was the effect of the 'Thirty-one Articles' of 1406, with which the power of Parliament seemed to reach its culmination, less than a century after the death of Edward I. Above all, recognising the fundamental weakness of their position, Parliament forbade any interference by sheriffs in the elections to the House of Commons, such as had rendered possible the 'packing' of many previous Parliaments; and they repeatedly demanded legislation against Livery and Maintenance—the system which made the nobles so dangerous.

In short the government of England seemed definitely to have become a very limited monarchy, in which the ultimate authority resided with Parliament. The course of events was to afford a terrible proof that England was not yet ready for such a system, and that the 'Lancastrian experiment,' as it has been called, was premature. The

king himself could scarcely be expected to accept the position to which he was reduced; and Henry IV.'s successor, Henry V., was soon to attempt a method of strengthening his power which kings have often tried—that of diverting the attention of their people to the glories of foreign conquest.

The genius of Shakespeare has portrayed Henry V.[1] as the very model of generous courage, magnanimity and patriotism, and has turned him into a national hero. The Henry V. of history scarcely corresponds with this splendid picture. He was a brave man, and an admirable soldier. But he could be pitilessly cruel, as when he decreed the slaughter in cold blood of the prisoners at Agincourt, or as when he ordered the Wycliffite martyr, John Bradby, to be withdrawn from the flames because his moans of anguish sounded like a recantation, but had him thrust back again when he proved staunch. Henry was something of a religious fanatic; but it is hard not to find hypocrisy in his assertions that he was the instrument of God to punish the French for their wickedness when he had undertaken a war of pure conquest, devoid of any shadow of right. Dissolute in his youth, he had during Henry IV.'s last years given his father much trouble by his greed for power; but from the moment of his accession he kept a strict rein upon his passions, and observed all the rules. It is difficult to find in his life the record of any generous action or of any natural impulse. Strong, unswerving, efficient in whatever he undertook, religious according to his lights, he is nevertheless an unsympathetic personality.

He succeeded to a throne apparently well established. Yet the real insecurity of the Lancastrian line was shown by the troubles of his first two years. In 1414 a Lollard conspiracy, real or imaginary, was disclosed, and crushed with many cruel executions. These troubles were the outcome of the persecuting policy of the Lancastrians, which Henry V. carried out much more systematically than his father. More alarming was the conspiracy of Cambridge and Scrope, which was discovered on the eve of Henry's embarkation for the campaign of Agincourt. The Earl of Cambridge was Henry's cousin, son of the Duke of York; he had married a sister of another cousin, the young Earl of March, who was the strict lineal successor of Edward III., and his plot was to carry off his brother-in-law into Wales,

[1] There is a short life of Henry V. by A. J. Church in the English Men of Action Series, and a fuller and more scholarly one by C. L. Kingsford in the Heroes of the Nations.

and there raise his standard as claimant to the throne. The danger was easily averted, and the conspirators lost their heads. But the episode showed that great nobles of the court factions and their armed bands were still a danger.

The main interest of Henry V.'s reign was his deliberate renewal of the war in France, and the brilliant success which he achieved in it. The renewal of war gave the restless magnates something to do, and found occupation for their retainers; and no doubt this formed one of the motives for undertaking it. The war served another purpose also. It raised the king's prestige to the highest point; Parliament almost enthusiastically voted the money required, and ceased to meddle much in the affairs of a government whose efficiency was proved by a succession of triumphs. But the uneventful character of domestic affairs during the years 1415-1422 did not mean that the nobles were no longer dangerous, or that Parliament had abandoned its claim to supremacy; as soon as the stream of success began to be interrupted, a new period of trouble for the Crown promptly opened.

[Tout's *History of England, 1216-1377*; Oman's *History of England, 1377-1485*; Vickers' *England in the Later Middle Ages*; Trevelyan's *England in the Age of Wycliffe*; Stubbs' *Constitutional History* (vols. ii. and iii.); Maitland's *Constitutional History*; Tout's *Place of Edward II. in English History*; Mackinnon's *Edward III.*; Capes' *English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*; Armitage-Smith's *John of Gaunt*; Poole's *Wycliffe and Movements for Reform*; Oman's *Great Revolt of 1381*; Rogers' *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*; Meredith's *Economic History*. A selection of contemporary materials is provided by Locke's *War and Misrule*.]

CHAPTER VIII

THE SECOND ATTEMPT TO CONQUER FRANCE

(A.D. 1411-1453)

§ 1. *The French Factions, and the Victories of Henry V.*

THE unhappy results of the first attempt to conquer France ought to have prevented a renewal of the hopeless enterprise. They failed to do so for a variety of reasons. The Lancastrian House was committed to a war policy, having taken the lead of the war party throughout the reign of Richard II. Henry IV. and Henry V. had strong reasons for wishing to provide a distraction for the great barons and their trains of retainers, such as a war would afford. Henry IV., and still more Henry V., were very ambitious, and eager to find a means of establishing the prestige of their dynasty. Above all, the conditions existing in France were such as to make the task of conquest seem easy.

In France, as in England, great magnates related to the royal house were disputing for the control of the organs of government. But there was this difference, that in France the greatest of the nobles, such as the Dukes of Burgundy, Orleans and Brittany, were semi-independent rulers of very large provinces. Notably was this the case with the House of Burgundy, which played in French politics, on a greater scale, a similar part to that played by the House of Lancaster in fourteenth-century England. The greatness of this branch of the French royal house only dated from the middle of the fourteenth century, but already it was adding province to province, and during the next generation was to control so large an area both in France and the Low Countries, that it could dream of creating a new middle kingdom between France and Germany.[1] The most important of its acquisitions was the county of Flanders, including the great manufacturing towns which purchased the bulk of the English wool. The natural alliance for the English government was an alliance with the rulers of Flanders.

[1] See the maps, Atlas, Plates 36 (*b*) and 23 (*b*).

At the beginning of the fifteenth century the nominal King of France, Charles VI., was subject to periodical fits of insanity, and the right of wielding the royal authority in his name was the subject of fierce rivalry between his cousin, the Duke of Burgundy, and his brother, the Duke of Orleans. When, in 1407, Burgundy procured the assassination of Orleans, the rivalry of the two factions developed into a civil war, which desolated France for many years. The opportunity seemed to Henry IV. too good to be missed. In 1411 he made an alliance with Burgundy, and was only prevented by illness from leading an army into France to join his ally; but an English contingent in that year helped to relieve the besieged city of Paris, which was held by the Burgundian party.

As soon as Henry V. succeeded to the throne he prepared to take up the project which his father had entertained but had never carried into effect. He claimed the French crown as the representative of Edward III.; but if Edward's claim was a bad one, Henry V.'s was worse, since he was not even Edward's nearest heir. He offered to abandon this claim at a price, and the Orleanist party (who now had the French king in their hands) were willing to go a good way to meet him. But his demands were so monstrous that no Frenchman could possibly have assented to them: they were obviously only a pretext for a war of the most undisguised aggression. Yet the war was popular in England, and Parliament gave its support, voting large subsidies. Though few wars have ever been waged with so small a semblance of right, there is no doubt that the renewed attack on France was regarded by the English as a national enterprise, and, until it became burdensome and unsuccessful, was enthusiastically supported by the nation as a whole.

In August 1415, Henry set sail with a force of about twelve thousand men.[1] He began by attacking Harfleur, at the mouth of the Seine, intending to use this port as a base for the systematic conquest of the province of Normandy. It took him more than a month to capture the town, and October had come, and the campaigning season was nearly over, before he was ready for a farther advance. The losses of the siege, and the necessity of leaving a garrison, had reduced his force to less than half of its original numbers. Yet he resolved to march northwards to Calais, though such a march could serve no useful military purpose.

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 36 (*b*).

Delayed by the difficulty of finding a passage over the Somme, he found his provisions exhausted, while a French army at least ten times as great as his own had been gathered to destroy him. Under these conditions the dazzling battle of Agincourt was fought, in which, with a loss of little over one hundred men, the English force utterly defeated their opponents, killing more than their own total numbers, and taking many prisoners. Agincourt was an astounding feat of arms, far surpassing Cressy and Poitiers. It at once restored, and more than restored, the damaged military prestige of the English. But it could have led to no important results, if the ugly civil strife between the Burgundians and the Orleanists (or Armagnacs, as they were now called after their principal leader, the Count of Armagnac) had not continued. In 1416 the Duke of Burgundy made a private peace with Henry; and his rivals were too much occupied in fighting him to be able to devote their main strength to checking the English invasion.

During the next four years Henry devoted himself to the systematic conquest of Normandy, steadily reducing one fortress after another, and thus showing himself a far more scientific soldier than Edward III. or the Black Prince. By 1419 he had mastered and garrisoned the whole province, and had provided himself with a solid foundation for further conquests. Only the unending strife of parties in France had enabled him to achieve so much, for no serious attempt was ever made to relieve the garrisons of the Norman towns. Henry's progress, however, so alarmed the French that it brought about a temporary reconciliation between the rival leaders; and they proposed a joint campaign against the English. But when John of Burgundy rode over to the Dauphin's [1] camp to arrange the plan of operations, the rancour of party once more overcame the needs of the country, and he was basely murdered (1419).

The murder of the Duke of Burgundy changed the whole situation, and opened the second phase of the war. Hitherto the Burgundians had been merely neutral; for sheer shame they had not dared to join the enemies of their country. Now the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, thirsting for revenge, and determined that the treacherous Dauphin who had murdered his father should never succeed to the French crown, made a formal alliance with Henry. By the

[1] The Dauphin was the eldest son of the King of France; the title, which corresponds to that of Prince of Wales, was taken from the province of Dauphiné, acquired in the fourteenth century.

treaty of Troyes, 1420, it was determined that Henry should marry the daughter of the insane French king, who was now in the custody of the Burgundian party, that he should act as regent, and that he should be recognised as heir to the crown. The Burgundians already controlled the greater part of Northern France, including Paris.[1] The Armagnac party held only the region south of the Loire and a few outposts in the north; and in the task of conquering Southern France Henry could now count upon half the resources of France in addition to his own English armies. It might well seem that the mastery of the whole French kingdom was within the grasp of the conqueror; and the English people at home were naturally intoxicated by these wonderful successes.

But of course the dream was a wholly futile one. France could never have submitted to a permanent English supremacy. Even if Henry had succeeded in conquering the whole of France, he and his successors could only have retained their hold upon the French throne by becoming French; and then what would have become of the freedom of England, or of her parliamentary liberties? The possibility of a complete conquest was as great a danger for England as for France. And it was a happy event for both countries when, after two strenuous years spent in reducing the last Armagnac strongholds in the north, and at a moment when his success seemed assured, the conquering king died on the 31st August 1422, worn out by the strain of his conquests. He had time to make arrangements for the future government of his dual realm; and he made a most religious end. His last words, spoken as if to an unseen spirit, were, 'You lie! you lie! my portion is with the Lord Jesus.'

Two months after Henry V., Charles VI., the imbecile King of France, also died. His disinherited son, Charles VII., the true heir to the French crown, was king only of a discredited and disunited party, and wielded no authority north of the Loire. The two-year-old infant, Henry VI., who had already succeeded to the throne of England, was now also burdened with the title of King of France, under the terms of the treaty of Troyes. To maintain the authority of government during a minority was sufficiently difficult even in England, as the case of Richard II. had already shown. But to do that, and at the same time to make the rule of a foreign prince acceptable in Northern France, was a task beyond human powers. Yet this was

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 36 (*b*).

the task imposed upon the Duke of Bedford, Henry V.'s younger brother, who acted as regent for his nephew; and Bedford, who was almost as great a captain as his brother, and a much more generous-minded man, went near to achieving the impossible. In face of immense difficulties, he kept faction feuds quiet in England, he maintained a cordial alliance with the Burgundian party, he won the loyalty of most of the Northern French by strictly observing French usages and by entrusting the work of government to Frenchmen; and during the next seven years he steadily kept the upper hand in the war.

§ 2. *Joan of Arc, and the Ruin of the English Ambitions in France.*

By 1428 the ruin of the French monarchy seemed almost inevitable. Powerful English forces were besieging Orleans, which controlled the line of the Loire, and was the key of Southern France. Charles VII. was hopeless and almost penniless, and possessed no leaders who could supply the vigour and energy which he lacked. His last field army had been destroyed, and he made no serious attempt to relieve Orleans. He looked on supinely from Chinon, while the very existence of France as an independent State seemed to be at stake.

At this critical moment one of the miracles of history happened. There came riding up to Chinon a girl of seventeen, dressed in men's clothes; she demanded to see the king, because she had a message from heaven to deliver to him. It was Joan of Arc,[1] the daughter of a well-to-do peasant of Domremi in Champagne—a region where the English and Burgundians were all-powerful. For four years this strong and healthy girl had seen visions and heard voices, which promised that France should be delivered from the English yoke: finally, in this winter, her angel visitors had commanded her to go forth in arms, to drive the English from Orleans, and to crown Charles VII. at Rheims. The king saw her, and her simple and sublime confidence roused him from his listlessness. She was arrayed in white armour, and set at the head of a company of soldiers, with whom she advanced towards Orleans, sending before her a messenger to bid the English depart ere they were swept away by the hand of God. The French courtiers sneered at her. The English soldiers began to

[1] There is a good book on Joan of Arc by Andrew Lang.

have superstitious fears of her as a witch. But the French army and people saw in her the direct emissary of Heaven, and followed her lead with utter devotion and assurance. She had appeared as the very embodiment of the spirit of France, to rouse her people from their factions and their lethargy; and from the moment of her coming all chance of an English conquest of France came to an end.

Inspired to heroism by the presence of the Maid, the French compelled the English besiegers to withdraw from Orleans. Then she led a force to Rheims, where, in the ancient crowning-place of all the French kings, Charles VII. was duly crowned and anointed. The Maid's appointed task was done; she had saved Orleans, and crowned the king, and she would fain have withdrawn. But the court found her too useful to let her go: she was employed upon new tasks, upon which she felt no such supernatural assurance. She failed to capture Paris; and in the end, in March 1430, she was taken a prisoner by the Burgundians, who sold her to the English for ten thousand pieces of gold. She was taken to Rouen, tried for witchcraft before a court consisting of doctors of the University of Paris, under the presidency of the French Bishop of Beauvais, and burnt alive in the market-place of Rouen, on 29th May 1431. This was one of the most hideous crimes of history; and the blame of permitting it must be laid at the door of the great Duke of Bedford. But even deeper is the shame of Charles VII., the king whose throne the heroic Maid had saved. He made no attempt to rescue her; though surely every knightly sword in France should have leaped from its scabbard to her aid. He did not even threaten to retaliate on his English prisoners, some of whom were of high rank, though such a threat would have been enough to save her life. But as a martyr in the flames of Rouen the Maid did even nobler service to France than when, in white armour, she led her men into the breaches of Orleans. She had shamed the selfish factions of the nobles. She had aroused into passion the patriotism of the French people. She had become for all time the emblem of the spirit of national freedom. She had created the indestructible unity of the French nation. She had made the English conquest of France for ever impossible and unthinkable.

Bedford and his captains struggled gallantly against the rising spirit of the French. But during the next five years they gradually lost ground, and by 1435 held little beyond Paris and the province of Normandy. Moreover Bedford's

relations with the Duke of Burgundy, upon which everything depended, gradually became more strained, partly owing to personal causes of friction on which we need not dwell, and partly because Burgundy felt more and more that the English cause was the losing cause. In 1435 an attempt was made to make peace at a congress at Arras. It broke down on the absolute refusal of the English representatives to abandon the title King of France, which, with foolish pride, the kings of England continued to bear for nearly four centuries to come. But meanwhile the Duke of Burgundy had made peace on his own account, recognising Charles VII. as king, at the price of the cession to himself of all the strong places in the province of Picardy, which left him a more powerful and independent prince than ever. Besides the wide lands of the *duchy* of Burgundy proper and the county of Flanders, for which he owed allegiance to the crown of France, his family had acquired, by marriage or conquest, the greater part of the Netherlands (modern Belgium and Holland) and the *county* of Burgundy (Franche Comté), for which allegiance was due to the Emperor. He was therefore more than a mere vassal; he was one of the most powerful princes in Europe.

The loss of the Burgundian alliance made the situation of the English in France almost hopeless; and the death of the great Duke of Bedford, soon after this disaster, was a culminating blow. Nevertheless the English captains fought with great gallantry. Though Paris was lost in 1436, Normandy was gallantly defended for fifteen years to come, and the narrow strip of territory in the extreme south, from Bordeaux to Bayonne, which had survived the disasters of the fourteenth century, still held out against all attacks. The final collapse of the English power in the end came suddenly, and it was due mainly to the inefficiency of the government of the Dukes of Suffolk and Somerset, which was rapidly bringing about anarchy and civil war in England. The battle of Formigny, in May 1450, sealed the fate of Normandy; before the end of August every English foothold in that great province, which Henry V. had so laboriously conquered, and which Bedford and his captains had so gallantly defended, was finally lost. In 1451-3 the French concentrated their forces for an attack on the ancient English province of Guienne, which had been loyal to the English crown ever since the time of Henry II. At the battle of Castillon, in July 1453, the last considerable English army in France was destroyed;

and when, three months later, the city of Bordeaux surrendered to the French, no French territory remained in English hands, save only the city of Calais, which was to be retained for another century.

The dreary and futile Hundred Years' War was at an end. It had produced the most profound effects upon the life and destiny of the two great nations whom it had embroiled. A tradition of hostility between them had been established; and with few and rare intervals they continued to regard one another as natural enemies for nearly four centuries to come—to their own great loss, and to the impoverishment of the world. In France the long strain of war had destroyed the possibility of parliamentary government, which had seemed within reach at the beginning of the fourteenth century; government by discussion is not practicable when hostile armies are actually encamped on the national territory, and France therefore inevitably fell under the rule of an absolute monarchy which grew more and more powerful as time passed, because it seemed the only safeguard of national freedom and strength. On the other hand, the long wars had created in the divided provinces of France a genuine and profound sentiment of national pride and patriotism, which had been sanctified and glorified by the life and death of the heroic Maid of France. In England the national sentiment was already powerful before the wars began, but no doubt their triumphs and disasters helped to root and strengthen this sentiment. The financial burden of the wars had contributed to shape the growth of English institutions, and had made possible the establishment of the supremacy of Parliament. On the other hand, the wars had fostered among the English, and especially among the great nobles, a very warlike and turbulent spirit, highly dangerous to the growth of orderly freedom; and, when at length the long conflict was over, the restless spirits which had found occupation for so many years in France returned only to find more mischievous means of satisfying their love of fighting in the hideous civil wars which broke out as soon as the long conflict in France was over. Amid that conflict, as we shall see, all that system of ordered freedom which had been so slowly and painfully worked out was gravely endangered; and for a time it seemed as if England, like France, would become a despotically-governed land.

[Oman's *History of England, 1377-1485*; Vickers' *England in the Later Middle Ages*; Kingsford's *Henry V.*; Mowat's *Henry V.*]

CHAPTER IX

THE STRIFE OF FACTIONS IN ENGLAND

(A.D. 1422-1485)

Henry VI., 1422: Edward IV., 1461: Edward V., 1483: Richard III., 1483.

§ 1. *Faction and Disorder in England.*

THE menace to national peace and good government arising from the strife of factions among the nobles had been always present during the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth, after thirty years of growing discord and disorder which followed on the death of Henry V., it came to a head in the hideous Wars of the Roses. It is not worth while to study in detail the course of these conflicts and wars, but it is worth while to realise what they signified, and what their bearing was upon the life of the nation.

Henry VI. was a child of two years old when he succeeded to the throne; and when he reached an age at which he might have taken a part in the work of government he turned out to be a mild, timid and simple-minded soul, with a strain of insanity which he inherited from his French grandfather. This meant that the royal authority would always be wielded by some one else; and it placed the government of the country at the mercy of factions of the greater nobles.

At first sight it might have been expected that under these circumstances the power of Parliament would become more complete than ever, and during the early years of the reign this seemed to be happening. Parliament set aside Henry V.'s arrangement for the government of the country during the king's minority, and provided that supreme control of the executive should belong not to a single regent, but to the King's Council as a whole, over which Parliament itself had long claimed a controlling voice. Moreover it was during these years that Parliament secured effective control over legislation. Hitherto it had only petitioned for laws, leaving the royal officers to draw them

up. Now the practice was established of putting the petition into the form of a draft law, or bill, which was submitted to the king for his acceptance or rejection; he practically lost the power of amendment. All this suggested that it was Parliament which was going to step into the place which the infancy and later the imbecility of the king left vacant.

But this did not happen. Instead of being able to control and regulate the court factions, Parliament increasingly fell under their influence, and its powers of appointing or dismissing members of the Council, or impeaching ministers, were used by each faction in turn, simply as a weapon against its opponents.

The elections to Parliament were in a large degree under the influence of the magnates in each county; and it was perhaps in part to make this easier that the important Act of 1430 was passed, whereby the right of voting in the election of knights of the shire was limited to holders of land in freehold to the value of at least forty shillings *per annum*—equivalent to about £30 of modern money. This was a serious limitation of the franchise, for whereas before 1430 all freemen in the shire had had a right to vote, now not merely those who did not hold land, but those who held even large farms on leasehold or copyhold, were forbidden to vote; and the restriction of voting rights to landowners made the control of elections by the nobles easier. Again the meetings of Parliament themselves became more and more turbulent, because the members were mostly adherents of factions. The Parliament of 1426, for example, is significantly known as the Parliament of Bats (or bludgeons), because the government found it necessary to forbid its members to bear arms, and they therefore arrived with clubs instead. More and more, as the century went on, the meetings of Parliament became simply gatherings of rival factions, groups of retainers following the lead of powerful nobles; and, apart from the voting of supplies, their proceedings were almost limited to attacks by one court faction upon another.

The root of all these evils was to be found in that change in the character of the nobility which we have already described. The great nobles were few in number—never more than about fifty during this period, even including the less important among them. They prided themselves upon maintaining large bands of paid and armed retainers, whose numbers were greatly increased by the French wars. They

also persuaded the minor gentry of their districts to join their followings and to wear their badges or liveries; and this practice grew because, owing to the disorderly state of the country, to wear the livery of a great noble was the best protection. The government was powerless to prevent this development, and, indeed, scarcely tried to do so, since the government itself consisted of these great nobles. Law and order could not be enforced against these bands.[1] When Mr. William Poole of Liverpool, in 1437, raided the house of Sir John Butler of Bewsey and carried off Lady Butler by force, Sir John could get no remedy, because the ruffian Poole was a protégé of the powerful house of Stanley. Butler petitioned Parliament for redress; but all that Parliament could do was to pass an act outlawing Mr. Poole, which was no remedy at all. The growing lawlessness of the country is the most marked feature of the period preceding the Wars of the Roses; and the only remedy for this lawlessness must be some healthy blood-letting among the nobles and their retainers. Not until this had happened could order and firm government and strict observance of law become possible again; and from this point of view the Wars of the Roses, horrible as they were, served a useful purpose.

Between the great nobles personal and family feuds raged merrily, and often led to private war. But besides this, they were grouped into two parties, perpetually striving for the control of the national government, and for the chances of enrichment, and of vengeance against their rivals, which this control could give. The leaders of these court parties were always princes of the blood-royal, who commonly had an eye to the possibility of inheriting the throne, for Henry VI. had no heir till 1453. One party professed to favour peace, the other the more energetic prosecution of the war; and the party out of power always posed as the constitutional party. But these were little more than pretexts.

So long as the Duke of Bedford lived comparative order was maintained. But even in this period there was acrimonious strife between the party headed by Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, who later became Cardinal and Papal Legate, and the party headed by Bedford's reckless younger brother, the Duke of Gloucester. One of Bedford's

[1] The best idea of the condition of England during this period is to be obtained from the remarkable family correspondence known as *The Paston Letters*.

greatest difficulties was to keep the peace between these two parties. The Cardinal was the most active member of the powerful Beaufort family, who were illegitimate sons of John of Gaunt, but had been legitimised by a statute of 1407, which definitely excluded them from the succession to the crown. On the whole the Cardinal held the upper hand in the Council; and he was undoubtedly a more moderate and statesmanlike man than his nephew, the Duke of Gloucester.

After Bedford's death in 1435 the Beauforts still held the upper hand, but the leadership of their faction fell into the hands of the Cardinal's nephew, Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and his ally, the Duke of Suffolk, grandson of Richard II.'s unpopular minister. But now they became more high-handed, and began to disregard and defy Parliament and to summon it less frequently; and men began to suspect that, in spite of the Act of 1407, the Beauforts were aiming at succeeding to the crown if Henry VI. should die without heirs. Gloucester, still the head of the Opposition, was supported by the Duke of York, who, being descended through his mother from the third son of Edward III., had a better hereditary claim to the throne than Henry VI. himself. And the great house of Neville, now the richest nobles in England, who included no less than five of the fifty lay peers, and were related to many of the rest, took the same side. Suffolk and Somerset attacked the Gloucester party with the utmost violence. In 1444 they arranged the marriage of Henry VI. to a French princess, Margaret of Anjou, and this high-spirited and passionate girl, who from the first completely dominated her feeble-minded husband, threw herself into the faction fight whole-heartedly on the side of Somerset. In 1447, at a packed Parliament at Bury St. Edmunds, held in a town controlled by armed men, Gloucester was charged with high treason, and condemned. He died mysteriously immediately afterwards. York, his chief supporter, was practically banished to Ireland, as Lord Lieutenant; and the Beaufort party seemed to be triumphant. They were intensely unpopular throughout the country, but they maintained themselves in power despite public opinion. Parliament, as the mouthpiece of the nation, henceforward counted for almost nothing.

But the Beaufort-Suffolk domination was shaken by the disasters in France, which were attributed, not altogether unjustly, to their incompetent rule. When Normandy

was lost in 1450 public discontent expressed itself in an alarming rebellion in Kent and Sussex, led by an old soldier, Jack Cade, who for a time made himself master of London as Wat Tyler had done in 1381. But the contrast between the demands of the rebels of 1381 and those of the rebels of 1450 is very striking. Jack Cade did not demand the abolition of villeinage, or other social reforms; villeinage had almost come to an end. He demanded the dismissal and punishment of the king's evil servants, and the restoration of good government, justice and order. And already before the outbreak of the rebellion (May) a Parliament, meeting in January, had impeached Suffolk. In order to save him the king banished him before he was condemned; but when the hated minister tried to escape to the Continent he was stopped by half a dozen ships, and beheaded across the gunwale of a boat without trial; the popular ballads of the period are full of rejoicings over the death of the traitor.

Yet still the king, or rather the queen, clung to the unpopular faction. The Duke of Somerset, returning from shameful defeat in Normandy, was welcomed like a conquering hero and made the Constable of England; while the Duke of York, returning from Ireland to take the lead of the Opposition party, had to organise an army in order to reach London in safety. In 1451 another Parliament demanded the banishment of Somerset; and the House of Commons (convinced that Somerset was aiming at the succession) asked that the Duke of York should be formally recognised as heir to the crown. But the government still defied the demands of Parliament; and now the two factions, the rival houses of Lancaster (represented by Somerset) and York, were arrayed against one another. Their retainers were embodied on each side: their armies were actually in the field.

The outbreak of war between them was delayed for a time by the great French attack on Guienne, the last English possession in France save Calais. But in 1453 Guienne was irrevocably lost; the Beaufort faction was finally discredited. Almost at the same time a son was born to Henry VI., and the poor king became insane. These events brought about the downfall of Somerset. Even the queen dared not support him. York, who had behaved with the most careful moderation, was declared by the House of Lords Protector and Defender of the Realm during the king's illness (1454). Somerset was thrown into the Tower; and the chief members of the Yorkist party, including

the vigorous young Earl of Warwick,[1] Richard Neville, were given places in the Council. It appeared as if a peaceful revolution had brought to an end the misrule of the Beaufort faction. But the nobles of that faction were openly getting ready for war, enlisting the returned soldiers no longer needed in France.

Unhappily the king recovered his reason before the end of the year. York's regency came to an end. His partisans were expelled from the Council. Somerset was restored to power, and he and the queen proceeded to summon, not a Parliament, which they dared not meet, but a council of the nobles of their own party 'to provide for the safety of the king's person against his enemies.' The meaning of this was obvious. The Yorkists were to be destroyed. They had no remedy but to take up arms. The Wars of the Roses had begun.

§ 2. *The Wars of the Roses.*

These dreary and murderous wars were primarily a struggle between factions of nobles, in which the rivalry of York and Lancaster was crossed and complicated by all sorts of family feuds among the nobles themselves, and private hatreds played quite as large a part as public policy. The nation as a whole was little concerned. The most highly developed parts of the country, the trading towns and the rising manufacturing districts, favoured the Yorkist cause, because it alone seemed to hold out any hope of order and good government; and it was mainly from the more backward regions of the north, of Wales and of the south-west, that the Lancastrian party drew its strength. But in truth the mass of the people, the farmers, the traders, the weavers, played almost no part in the war, and lucky were the towns which were able to shut their gates upon it altogether. The fighting was done, not by national levies, but by the armed retainers of the nobles, and in most cases the numbers engaged were comparatively small. But the struggle was carried on in an extraordinarily ruthless way; on both sides, especially after the battle of Wakefield (1460), it became the regular practice to slaughter every leader who fell into the hands of the victors, while those who escaped were condemned without trial, by sweeping Acts of Attainder rushed through packed Parliaments. The result of this practice was, that the older nobility almost disappeared,

[1] There is a good short life of *Warwick the Kingmaker*, by C. W. Oman, in the English Men of Action Series.

and the way was left clear for the re-establishment of royal authority and the restoration of order and law.

A very brief narrative must suffice for the course of the wars.[1] The first battle (1 St. Albans, 1455) was a small affair, in which the Yorkists won owing to the military ability of the young Earl of Warwick, and the pestilent Duke of Somerset was slain. There followed an interval of four years of restless peace, during which Queen Margaret was engaged in reorganising her party and preparing to ruin her rivals. Then (1459) strife broke out again; and, though they won a skirmish at Blore Heath, the Yorkist leaders found their position hopeless, and had to flee, York to Ireland and Warwick to Calais. A packed Parliament (largely nominated by the sheriffs without even consulting the electors) was employed to complete the ruin of the defeated party by means of the new weapon of a wholesale Act of Attainder, which, without any semblance of trial, simply condemned a crowd of victims to death and confiscation. Meanwhile York made himself master of Ireland, and the very able and enterprising Warwick controlled Calais and the fleet.

In 1460 the exiles landed, Warwick in Kent and York in Lancashire. Warwick defeated the main Lancastrian army at Northampton, letting the rank and file escape, but slaughtering all the knights and nobles; and King Henry VI. himself fell into his hands. Queen Margaret fled to Wales. Here the Lancastrian cause was upheld by a Welsh gentleman, Owen Tudor, who had married the widow of Henry V., and his two sons, the elder of whom (created Earl of Richmond) had married the heiress of the Beauforts. But it was among the Percies and other great houses of the north that the Lancastrian party was strongest. Their forces, at the end of 1460, defeated and slew the Duke of York at Wakefield, and most mercilessly slaughtered not only all the leaders, but their followers as well. The decapitated heads of the Duke of York and his seventeen-year-old son were set above the gates of York. Then, moving south, the queen's army defeated Warwick at the second battle of St. Albans (Feb. 1461), and recaptured Henry VI. But meanwhile the Duke of York's eldest son, Edward, Earl of March, had won a complete victory over the Welsh Lancastrians at Mortimer's Cross (Feb.); and in March 1461 the main Lancastrian army was utterly destroyed at Towton in Yorkshire. The slaughter was fearful; most of the Lancastrian leaders were killed in

[1] For these battles see the map, Atlas, Plate 34.

the battle; the rest were beheaded after it was over; and England lay in the hands of the Yorkists, while the queen with her husband and son took refuge in Scotland.

§ 3. *The House of York and the Re-establishment of Royal Power.*

With the battle of Towton the rule of the Yorkist dynasty definitely began, though there was still to be a good deal of fighting. Already, before the crowning victory, the Earl of March had been declared king, as Edward IV., at a specially summoned Parliament. After the battle a new Parliament was employed to pass a wholesale Act of Attainder, including fourteen peers, living and dead, and more than a hundred adherents of Henry VI. That poor imbecile himself was condemned as a usurper and a traitor, and deprived not only of the crown, but of the family estates of the House of Lancaster. Out of the immense lands confiscated from the defeated party Edward's followers were enormously enriched; and above all the Earl of Warwick, to whom he mainly owed his crown, stood forth as the most powerful subject in the realm, and its practical dictator. And for a time the new king, who for all his ability was a dissolute and indolent man, was apparently content to leave the supreme control in the hands of his masterful lieutenant.

The fierce heroic queen would not accept her defeat. With indomitable energy she invaded Northumberland again in 1463, without success. In 1464 the last levies of the Lancastrian party in the north were defeated at Hedgeley Moor and Hexham; and these victories were followed by the most bloody series of executions that had yet taken place. The first act of the Wars of the Roses was over. And the position of the new king seemed to be made absolutely secure when in 1466 the unhappy Henry VI., who had been wandering in disguise from one house to another, was captured in Lancashire, and imprisoned in the Tower.

The first period of the reign of Edward IV. extended from 1461 to 1471. It was marked by two main features. In the first place, there was a steady decline in the influence of Parliament. Enriched by the Lancastrian confiscations, and unburdened by foreign war, the king was not dependent upon Parliamentary grants; and though Parliament met several times, it did little or nothing. The days of its ascendency were at an end. And the nation, weary of anarchy, was content that it should be so.

In the second place, the relations between Edward IV. and the great Earl of Warwick became steadily more strained. Warwick wanted peace and even alliance with France, where the cunning King Louis XI. was rapidly establishing the royal power, and was engaged in a keen conflict with the powerful house of Burgundy. Edward, on the other hand, preferred to continue the traditional alliance with Burgundy, and in 1467 he married his sister to the young Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold.

But for a long time he allowed Warwick to conduct negotiations with the French king, and even to make proposals for a French marriage. Meanwhile the king had chosen his own bride—a widow five years older than himself, belonging to a family of the lesser nobility, which had hitherto been identified with the Lancastrian party. He had actually been married to her five months before he announced the fact to the indignant Warwick, who had been allowed to go on with the negotiations for a French match. And, what added more than ever to the great earl's wrath, the king began to shower estates and titles, out of the confiscated Lancastrian lands, upon the connexions of his wife. This was no mere favouritism. Edward IV.—as subtle in his methods as Charles II., who in many ways resembled him—was deliberately endeavouring to create a new nobility dependent upon himself, as a balance to the overwhelming power of Warwick and the rest of the Neville clan.

The result was that Warwick determined to overthrow the ungrateful master whom he had enthroned. After a confused struggle (1469-70), in the course of which at one moment Edward was a prisoner in Warwick's hands, and at the next Warwick was a fugitive at Calais, Edward was himself compelled to flee the country (1470), and the king-maker brought out the enfeebled old King Henry VI. from the Tower and enthroned him. But next year Edward was back, at the head of forces largely supplied by the Duke of Burgundy. At the battle of Barnet (April 1471), Warwick was defeated and slain; and at the battle of Tewkesbury (May), the Lancastrians of the west were completely destroyed; the hideous slaughter included the young Prince Edward, son and heir of Henry VI. The House of Lancaster had come to an end. The only possible remaining representative of that branch of the royal house was Henry of Richmond, grandson of the Welsh gentleman, Owen Tudor, and son of Margaret Beaufort.

From 1471 to 1483 Edward IV.'s power was unchallenged.

He showed himself a jovial, loose-living, easy-going prince, extremely indolent and unwilling to take the trouble of any great enterprise. He disgusted his brother-in-law, Charles of Burgundy, whom he had promised to aid against France, by allowing himself to be bought off with a pension by Louis XI. (1475). But he was by no means a mere pleasure-lover. He could display a revolting cruelty when it seemed to be useful for his security, as he had often shown during the war, and as he showed again in the attainder and murder of his brother, the Duke of Clarence (1478). He was shrewd enough to see the desirability of dispensing with Parliament as much as possible, and rarely summoned it. He systematically endeavoured to create a new nobility dependent upon the Crown. When he died (1483), a worn out voluptuary not yet forty years old, he had already gone far to turn England from a constitutional monarchy into something very like a despotism.

But despite all Edward IV.'s faults the House of York seemed to be securely established on the throne when he was succeeded by his young son, Edward V. Within two years it had fallen in ruins. This was because its destinies fell into the hands of a criminal, a man utterly unscrupulous and as merciless as Pedro the Cruel, whose blood ran in his veins. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Edward IV.'s brother, had won a good reputation both as an administrator and as a general. But having no moral sense he could not resist the temptation that beset him when he found only two boys between himself and the throne. He bribed some of the leading nobles to take his side; imprisoned and beheaded without trial those who were certain to oppose him, including especially the connexions of the queen-mother; locked up his two nephews in the Tower; assumed the crown himself; and, a few days after his coronation, had the two young princes murdered. These deeds were more than even fifteenth-century England, sated as she was with blood and cruelty, could tolerate. Even Richard's chief accomplice, the Duke of Buckingham, revolted when he heard of these pitiful murders; but he, too, found his way to the block.

These horrors gave a chance to the ruined House of Lancaster, and during the next two years widespread plots for a general revolt were being made in England. The plan of the conspirators was to bring back the exiled Earl of Richmond, grandson of Owen Tudor the plain Welsh gentleman on his father's side, and of John of Gaunt's illegitimate son, John Beaufort, on his mother's side, and

to marry him to Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV., and a sister of the murdered princes, thus blending the Yorkist and the Lancastrian claims to the throne. Fearing something of the sort, it was whispered, the criminal king thought of divorcing his wife and actually marrying his own niece, the sister of the boys he had assassinated. But in August 1485, aided by money and men supplied from France, Henry of Richmond landed in Wales, where he was, as a Welshman, sure of support. He advanced through Wales with growing numbers to Shrewsbury, where some English malcontents joined him. But he had only a force of some five thousand men when he marched against Richard, who was collecting his forces at Leicester. Meanwhile a third army, from the Lancashire and Cheshire lands of the Stanleys, was independently drawing near, not yet committed to either side. On the 21st of August was fought the decisive battle of Bosworth Field. Part of Richard's own army played him false. The Stanleys joined in against him when they saw that he was likely to lose; and though the criminal king fought to the end with desperate bravery, he was utterly defeated, and lay dead on the field. His battered crown, found in a hawthorn bush, was set on the head of Richmond by Lord Stanley; the army acclaimed him as Henry VII.; and the dismal Wars of the Roses were over.

The battle of Bosworth not only ended the anarchy of the fifteenth century; it ended the long preparation of the English people for the part they were to play in the modern age. For the mediæval period was now at an end: and all the signs of the times, in world-politics, in the realm of thought, and perhaps above all in the sphere of geographical exploration, showed that a new era was dawning. Not the least promising sign of this new era, so far as the islands were concerned, was the fact that England, the greatest of the four nations, received on Bosworth Field a Welsh king, and the process of unifying the peoples of the islands was carried a step further.

[Oman, *History of England, 1377-1485*, is the best modern summary of this dismal period; see also his *Warwick the Kingmaker*; Vickers, *England in the later Middle Ages*; Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, vol. iii.; Ramsay's *Lancaster and York*; Gairdner's edition of the *Paston Letters*, with long introduction; Gairdner's *Richard III.*; Denton's *England in the Fifteenth Century*; Mrs. J. R. Green's *English Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*. A selection of contemporary materials is provided by Garmon Jones' *York and Lancaster*.]

CHAPTER X

WALES, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Our attention in this book has been mainly given to the history of England, because the fortunes of England during this period, and especially the development of her institutions and her wars with France, were to have a very great influence upon the history of all the island peoples. And as the other peoples lived a more or less isolated existence, and were not so far advanced in their development, we need only take a general survey of their history.

§ 1. *Wales.*

From the time of Edward I.'s conquest onwards Wales enjoyed a degree of internal peace such as she had never known before; and the maintenance of this peace was helped by the foreign wars of the English kings, which drew off the most turbulent and warlike of the Welsh gentry and their followers. Welshmen played a very important part in the long wars with France—a part to which Shakespeare has paid some tribute in his character of Fluellen (Llywelyn), the gallant Welsh captain. Because of this peace, trade and industry for the first time began to make serious headway among the Welsh. The English kings, from Edward I. onward, encouraged this development by granting charters to Welsh towns, which now first began to play an important part in the life of the country; and the woollen industry, fostered by the sheep on the Welsh hills, began to bring some wealth into the little barren mountain-land. But there was a good deal of hostility between the towns, which were the chief centres of English influence, and the rural districts, which remained purely Welsh in character, and in which the lays of the bards still kept alive the ancient poetical tradition of the country.

In spite of the peace and order which reigned in the country, the spirit of Welsh nationality was still strong and living.

The proof of this is to be found in the extraordinary success of Owen Glendower's rising, of which something has been said elsewhere.[1] For half a dozen years Owen Glendower was the unquestioned master of a practically independent Wales. His aim was the organisation of Welsh nationality; he desired the establishment of a Welsh Parliament on the model of the English Parliament, and he even summoned one meeting of such a body at Machynlleth, in the building still known as Owen Glendower's Parliament House. But in spite of its initial success his rising was from the first doomed to failure, and its chief interest was that it showed how strong Welsh national feeling still was.

In the Wars of the Roses Wales played a very important part, and now first she began to influence the history of her greater partner. The Yorkist party drew much of its strength from the border lands of the earldom of March —the lands of the House of Mortimer. But the real Wales was mainly ranged on the Lancastrian side. This was chiefly due to the influence of that gallant gentleman of Anglesey, Owen Tudor, who made so surprising a marriage with the French widow of Henry V., and whose sons, Edmund, Earl of Richmond, and Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, were the most loyal supporters of the Lancastrian cause. Edmund Tudor married Margaret Beaufort, the granddaughter of John of Gaunt; and their son, Henry Tudor, became in the end the representative of the Lancastrian claim to the throne. It was from Wales that Henry Tudor, naturally enough, drew the bulk of the troops which won the battle of Bosworth; and with the accession of a Welsh dynasty to the English throne—and that the most brilliant dynasty that has ever ruled England—a new era in the history of the two nations began. One of the tasks of the Tudor kings was to weld the two countries finally and perfectly together; and henceforth, though the two nations remained distinct, they were indissolubly partners.

§ 2. *Scotland.*

Robert II., 1371: Robert III., 1390: James I., 1406: James II., 1437: James III., 1460: James IV., 1488.

The history of Scotland during all this period is a rather dreary record of desultory wars with England, and internal feuds between the king and the nobles. There were many wild and romantic episodes in these struggles,

[1] Chapter VII., p. 161 above.

some of which will be found, picturesquely told, in Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*; but these episodes had little bearing upon the development of the nation, and we must leave them aside. Scotland indeed possessed a Parliament, but it never played a part in the nation's life such as was taken by the English Parliament. This was partly because the Scottish king was not only expected to, but generally did, 'live of his own,' and therefore the financial weapon for obtaining parliamentary supremacy was lacking. But the weakness of the Scottish Parliament was mainly due to its constitution. It consisted of all the great barons, all the great prelates (bishops and abbots), and burgesses from the royal burghs. The burgesses were first summoned by Robert Bruce in 1326. But they do not seem to have been regarded as a necessary part of Parliament until the middle of the fifteenth century. What is more, they were from an early date elected not by the whole body of townsmen, but by the town councils, so that even the burgesses were not a really representative body. There was no element in the Scottish Parliament corresponding to the elected knights of the shire, who formed the most effective part of the English House of Commons. King James I., indeed, who had spent a long captivity in England, in 1427 required the gentry and freeholders of each shire to elect 'two or more wise men'; but the precedent was not repeated, and the Scottish Parliament remained an assembly of great barons, prelates and burgesses, who all sat in a single chamber. They formed the 'Three Estates,' and the word 'Estates' was commonly used instead of 'Parliament.' Moreover an unfortunate practice grew up by which the estates delegated all their power to a committee (the 'Lords of the Articles') which could be, and generally was, 'packed' by the king or by a faction of nobles. For all these reasons the Scottish Parliament never became a nationally representative body like the English Parliament.

One of the chief sources of disorder in Scotland was the incapacity of the Crown to deal with the turbulence of the great nobles, and especially of the very powerful and unruly House of Douglas, which during the greater part of this period almost overshadowed the king. Whenever the king tried to attack them they were apt to enter into relations with England, and to stir into unrest the unsubdued chieftains of the wild Highlands, which were never completely conquered or brought under regular government. The weakness of the Crown was increased by the character

of the Stewart kings of this period, and also by a series of unlucky accidents. Robert II. was a rather colourless prince. His son, Robert III., was a weakling, who left all power in the hands of his brother, the Duke of Albany.[1] Albany murdered his nephew, the Duke of Rothesay (1402); and when Rothesay's younger brother, James, the next heir, was by sheer bad luck captured by the English on his way to France, and kept as a prisoner till 1424, Albany and his son continued to rule as regents over a country torn asunder by baronial strife. James I., an able man and a considerable poet, spent the first eighteen years of his reign as a prisoner in the Tower of London. He married one of the Beauforts, and was released in 1424. He came back resolved to restore order. But he was too fierce and too hurried in his attacks on the nobles; and, after a very stormy reign, was butchered by them in 1437. James II. was a child of eight when he succeeded, and his disorderly minority undid all the work of his father. When he came of age he attacked the Douglases with some success. But he was slain at the age of thirty in a raid into England to help his Beaufort cousins. Once more there was a long minority, during which the young king, James III., passed from the control of one faction of nobles to another. When he grew up he married a Norwegian princess (1469), who brought Orkney and Shetland as her dowry. But his reign was as disturbed as that of his predecessors. Rebellions and assassinations were unceasing, and he especially suffered from the treachery of his brothers, who perpetually intrigued with Edward IV. of England. James III. would not have been a Stewart if he had not died tragically. He fell from his horse, and was murdered in his bed by a priest who came to confess him.

It is a sorry story. Yet the history of Scotland during this period is not merely an unrelieved tale of anarchy and bloodshed. King James I., who probably wrote *The King's Quhair* during his imprisonment in England, was only one of a series of poets who distinguished the period; and the terrible stories of vengeance and crime which fill the annals of Scotland at least provided material for a wonderful ballad literature. More important, Scotland was provided with two universities in this age, St. Andrews in 1414 and Glasgow in 1451. The poor scholar, who was to build the greatness of Scotland in the future, 'cultivating the Muses on a little oatmeal,' was beginning to take his place in the life of the

[1] Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth* deals with this period.

nation. And that intense interest in theological questions, which has been another of the main features of modern Scotland, may be said to have begun in this age. Lollardy, spreading from England, won many adherents, especially in the west country. Its embers were not cold when the Reformation broke into flame.

But the most persistent feature of Scottish history during this age was the unvarying hostility between the Scots and the English, and the equally steady friendship between Scotland and France. It would be useless to record the endless and usually futile raids of Scottish armies into England, and of English armies into Scotland. They were almost unceasing throughout the period, and on the Borders a state of war was normal. The French alliance brought large Scottish forces into the field against the English in the second phase of the Hundred Years' War ; and throughout the remainder of the fifteenth century bodies of Scottish mercenaries were always maintained by the French kings.[1]

It appeared, then, that the Scots and the English were irreconcilably divided at the close of the Middle Ages ; and the endless war between them formed a principal cause of the backward and turbulent condition of Scotland. Yet there were already factors making for unity. The most important parts of Scotland spoke the English language. The Scottish poets were deeply influenced by English models. Scottish institutions were (at a great distance) modelled upon those of England. The movement of Scottish thought on religious questions owed a great deal to English thought. Hostile as they were, the two nations were not unsuited to be close partners. But the greatest days of Scotland were yet to come : they were to begin with the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

§ 3. *Ireland.*

The most pitiful part of the story of the islands during this age is that of Ireland. It had been a divided country ever since the first Norman Conquest in the reign of Henry II. Down to the reign of Edward I. the Norman barons had made steady progress, conquering their Irish neighbours and introducing feudal law in place of the Irish tribal usages ; and it would have been a happy thing if this process had been completed in Ireland, as it was in the greater part

[1] Scott's *Quentin Durward*, one of his finest tales, narrates the adventures of a young Scot in the French service during this period.

of Scotland. But from the time of the invasion of Edward Bruce (1315-1318) the power of the Norman baronage over the greater part of Ireland was broken, and the authority of the English government steadily declined. Irish chieftains, like Lysaght O'More in the reign of Edward III., reconquered regions which had passed under English rule, and re-established Irish customs and mode of life, and especially the Irish system of tribal landholding and the Irish rules of succession to land. Some even of the Norman barons, like the de Burghs or Burkes in Connaught, became wholly Irish and adopted Irish rules of land tenure. This was not, of course, in itself a bad thing; but its evil result was that there was an increasingly sharp cleavage between the two races, and that the outlying regions of Ireland were no longer bound to the Crown, even by the formal tie of feudal obedience. In 1366 an attempt to check this process was made by the Statute of Kilkenny, which made it high treason for the English settlers to adopt Irish dress and customs, or the Irish rules of succession to land, or to marry native Irish women, or to trade with the Irish. This monstrous enactment was in fact a confession of defeat. It had no effect, but it naturally increased the embitterment of the two races.

In fact, throughout this period, Ireland was broken into three very unequal areas.[1] There was a small region round Dublin which was effectively ruled by the English government, and in which English law was on the whole satisfactorily administered. This region was known as the Pale. Towards the end of the period it measured about thirty miles from north to south, twenty from east to west. Then there were some regions outside the Pale, especially in Leinster and Munster, where great barons of Norman origin ruled their estates almost as independent princes, but still recognised their feudal dependence upon the English king, and still maintained, through their own courts, feudal modes of land tenure. Of these the most important were the great families of Butler, Earls of Ormond (Tipperary), whose title was granted by Edward III., and the various branches of the powerful House of Fitzgerald or Geraldine, notably the Earls of Desmond (in Cork), who received their title in 1329, and Kildare (1316). These magnates ruled their regions as independent feudatories, and constantly engaged in private war with one another and with their Irish neighbours;

[1] See the map of mediæval Ireland, Atlas, Plate 42 (*a*).

but they also maintained relations with the English Crown, and took part in the proceedings of the Irish Parliament at Dublin. The rest of Ireland—the great bulk of the country—was under the rule of Irish clan chieftains, who gave a formal and meaningless recognition to the English Crown, but lived their own life apart. They were obviously numerous enough to destroy the English colony if they had united; but they were incapable of co-operation, and the traditional English policy was to play them off against one another.

Richard II., in two visits to Ireland, tried to establish the supremacy of the Crown, but his success was only momentary. Henry IV. was too busy with internal troubles to give any serious attention to Ireland. Under Henry V. the gallant Sir John Talbot carried on some miscellaneous fighting, and acquired lands for his family in the south-east. But the area under effective English control went on shrinking; the English settlers became more and more Irish, and it was of little use to pass such laws as that which forbade English settlers to wear moustaches lest they should be mistaken for Irish. The most successful English viceroy during this whole period was Richard, Duke of York. His policy was that of friendship with both races. It did not lead to any improvement in the efficiency of government, or to any decrease in the local independence of barons and chieftains. But it won for the Yorkist party the loyal adherence of most of Ireland, with the exception of the Butlers, who took the Lancastrian side. When Richard had to flee from England in 1459, he was cordially welcomed in Ireland, and the Irish Parliament practically declared its independence of England. The chief friends of the Yorkists were the Fitzgeralds, Earls of Kildare, who from now onwards play a dominant part in the direction of Irish affairs. But the continued conflict of chiefs and barons still went on; and the limits of the Pale were at their narrowest when the period ended.

We have spoken several times of the Irish Parliament. It had been set up in 1295 in imitation of the English Parliament, and included barons, knights and burgesses. But it represented only the English colony, not the Irish people. It was an almost powerless body, and as a rule entirely under the control of the English viceroy; because the English colony knew that its existence depended altogether on the support of the English government.

Ireland, then, was the only one of the Four Nations which

was not only deeply divided but torn asunder by acute racial hostility, and devoid of any effective common government. The problem of giving unity and peace to the unhappy country was one of the most difficult of the island problems at the opening of the modern age. It had never yet been systematically tackled, because, owing to her geographical position, the anarchy of Ireland did not seem to do any harm to England. The problem was not insoluble; but, as we shall see, it was dealt with in the most unhappy way; and, as from the beginning, so in the modern age, circumstances always seemed to suggest disastrous methods to the rulers of the distressful isle.

[O. M. Edwards' *Wales* (Story of the Nations); Hume Brown or Andrew Lang, *History of Scotland*; Richey, *Short History of the Irish People*.]

CHAPTER XI

EUROPE AND THE ISLANDS ON THE EVE OF THE MODERN AGE

§ 1. *The Cosmopolitan Ideal of the Middle Ages and its Breakdown.*

By the common consent of historians the later years of the fifteenth century are held to mark the close of the mediæval period and the beginning of the modern age. In all spheres vast changes were visibly taking place. The general use of gunpowder was transforming the conditions of warfare, and dethroning the mailed knight from the ascendency he had hitherto enjoyed. The revival of learning was undermining the most cherished conceptions of the Middle Ages. The invention of printing was making it far easier for new ideas to be diffused and to influence men's action. The non-European world was beginning to be disclosed to Europe. Some of the greater European States were beginning to assume their modern form; in place of a medley of feudal principalities, a group of powerful and highly organised Nation-States, England, France, Spain, had emerged in Western Europe, and the character of international relations was undergoing a rapid transformation. Above all, the ruling political ideas of the mediæval period had ceased to exercise much influence upon men's minds.

The noblest dream of the Middle Ages was the idea that the whole civilised world (or, what seemed to be the same thing, the whole of Latin Christendom) was, or ought to be, organised as a single great State, governed by a single moral code. It was believed to be the will of God that all His people should be shepherded by two ruling powers, a spiritual power, the Papacy, and a secular power, the Holy Roman Empire, the inheritor of the august sovereignty of old Rome. There had always been a prince bearing the title of Roman Emperor. But there had never been a time when his direct authority was accepted over all Europe. In fact the title had been, since 962, attached to the German kingdom, and the power of the Emperor had been limited

to Germany and Italy. But so long as the Emperor was really the greatest prince in Europe, as he was down to 1250, the ideal of his universal sovereignty did not seem altogether meaningless. Since 1250, however, the Emperor had ceased to be anything more than the nominal head of the chaotic bundle of little States into which Germany was now divided; he was overshadowed by the far more powerful rulers of the consolidated nations of the West; and the old dream of the Holy Roman Empire as the representative of the unity of the civilised world was dead for ever. The elected King of Germany continued to call himself Emperor, and to enjoy a nominal precedence among the rulers of Europe, down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. But he was only one, and not even the most powerful, of the European sovereigns.

The Papacy had done far more than the Empire to turn the idea of the unity of Europe into a reality. Not only was the Pope the undisputed head of the Church of all the West, with a claim to the spiritual obedience of every Western Christian, but he had also assumed very important political functions. During the great days of Rome's political and spiritual ascendency, from the middle of the eleventh century to the end of the thirteenth, the great popes, such as Gregory VII. and Innocent III., had been guardians of the moral law which was common to all Europe. They could outlaw princes or States which disregarded this law; they could depose unrighteous rulers; they could arbitrate in disputes between States; and, though they could not stop war altogether, they could and did impose restraints upon the methods in which it was waged. They could do all this because of the moral ascendency which they wielded over the consciences of men, and because the powerful organisation of the Church in all lands, which was under their control, was a factor which no sovereign dare disregard.

But during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the political authority of the popes had gradually broken down. This was due to several reasons. On the one hand, the Papacy itself no longer seemed to be so disinterested in its aims as it had earlier been, but seemed to be using its spiritual authority largely for the purpose of heaping up riches. The Church everywhere had fallen into corruption; bishops had become intriguing politicians; monks and friars greedy and dissolute idlers. This had led to widespread protests and expressions of discontent in all countries,

of which the Wycliffite movement in England and the Hussite movement in Bohemia were only the most violent. On the other hand, the pride and power of the great consolidated States like England and France were no longer willing to submit to the kind of papal influence which had been accepted in earlier days; and we have seen how the English Parliament had struck blow after blow at the claims of the Papacy, culminating in the Statute of Præmunire in 1393, by which the introduction of a papal bull into England was made a penal offence. And finally, the influence of the Papacy had been gravely reduced by the events of its history during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For seventy years it had deserted the holy city of Rome and made its headquarters at Avignon, where it was supposed to have become the creature of the French monarchy. Then had followed the ugly episode of the Great Schism, when for forty years (1378-1417) there were always two, and sometimes three, rival popes, hurling anathemas at one another, and competing for the allegiance of the various European States. During that period it was impossible to take seriously the claim of the Pope to be the head of the European political system and the guardian of European morals. The schism had been ended by a series of Church Councils, notably those of Constance (1414-18) and Basle (1431-49). These councils had for a time simply put aside the papal authority, and many men hoped that they would be able to carry out a thorough reform of the Church 'in its head and in its members.' But the conciliar movement had failed. The popes had resumed their unlimited sovereignty over the Church. And unhappily the popes of this period were among the most worldly men who ever occupied the papal throne. Thus a great opportunity of restoring the purity, and with it the unity and influence, of the Church had been lost. In all countries the Church lost its independence, and fell under the control of the government. In all countries also it had largely lost the allegiance of the mass of men. The moral unity of Christendom was breaking up.

In its place came the idea of the supremacy of the State—the idea that whatever a State might do for the increase of its own power was justified by success, and that there could be no moral restraints upon the actions of States in their dealings with one another. We have already seen that the fifteenth century in England was marked by extraordinary ferocity, treachery and immorality on the part of the leaders in the faction strife of the Roses. This feature

was by no means peculiar to England. It was common to the whole of Western Europe in this age, and it was due to the decay of religious belief, and to the break-down of moral restraints which accompanied it.

§ 2. *The Political Condition of Europe: the Rise of Nation-States.*

The new Europe,[1] then, was a Europe of many States, great and little, which no longer felt themselves restrained by the common conscience of Christendom, expressed through the Empire and the Church, but which felt themselves justified in using all means for increasing their power at one another's expense. Most of these States were nothing more than 'estates'—territories belonging to their ruling princes. Their boundaries were quite artificial; and their subjects were not held together by any strong natural ties, except such loyalty as their masters could deserve. But there were a few States, and these the greatest and the most powerful, which were Nation-States; whose citizens, owing to community of language or traditions or modes of life, felt that they 'belonged together,' and could take a pride in their common achievements, and be thrilled by a common patriotism. We have got so much into the habit of thinking that 'Nations' and 'States' ought to be identified, that we do not realise how big and important a thing the appearance of these Nation-States really was. There had never been States of this kind in the history of the world before.

Of these new Nation-States England was the first to achieve her national unity and to learn to be proud of it, and we have traced the process by which this had come about. Wales was a little nation which had been annexed to the English nation-state: she retained her national spirit, but accepted the position because her distinct character and customs were not suppressed or interfered with. Scotland, though in many ways deeply divided, had become a nation in resisting the attempt of the English to conquer her, and was fiercely attached to her national independence. Ireland was, unhappily, not a unified nation. But on the whole the national idea was more firmly rooted in the islands than anywhere else, and the national spirit was producing great results.

Of the other nations, the greatest was France, which,

[1] For Europe in this period, see the maps, Atlas, Plates 7 and 8.

after many troubles, had been welded into unity in the fire of the Hundred Years' War. Her government had been organised under the cunning, efficient and unscrupulous despot, Louis XI., who, by breaking the power of the House of Burgundy and reconquering from it most of the French territories which it had long ruled, had almost completed the unification of France.[1] From this time onwards, the united realm of France was always to play a leading part in European affairs. Proud of her unity, France was about to make a bid, under the guidance of her despot kings, for the leadership of Europe.

Further south, the little nation of Portugal, gradually reconquered from the Moors during the Middle Ages, and filled with the crusading spirit, had already begun to pursue her ancient enemies into Northern Africa, and was entering upon that marvellous career of exploration and conquest which will attract our attention in a later chapter, and which was to be the great source of Portuguese national pride.

Her greater neighbour, Spain, had just begun to achieve national unity at the end of the fifteenth century.[2] Throughout the Middle Ages she had been divided into a number of States. Their history had chiefly consisted in an endless struggle against their Mohammedan neighbours, who had in the eighth century very nearly mastered the whole of Spain, and still retained, in the fifteenth, a shrunken but rich little realm in the extreme south. When Ferdinand, King of Aragon, in 1469 married Isabella, later Queen of Castile, the first great step was taken towards the unification of Spain. When these two princes in 1492 conquered Granada, the last important stronghold of the Moors, another great step was taken; and the process was completed by the conquest of Navarre in 1512. Spain was not yet a really united nation; Aragonese and Castilians had distinct systems of government, and were very jealous of one another. But the united monarchy formed a very powerful State, capable of rivalling France for the leadership of Europe; and this rivalry began in the last years of the fifteenth century.

These were the new Nation-States which were about to play the leading parts in the great drama of modern history. Perhaps we may add to them the kingdoms of Poland, Bohemia and Hungary in Eastern Europe.[3] Poland was

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 15 (*c*).
[2] See map, Atlas, Plate 18 (*d*).
[3] See Atlas, Plate 8.

a very extensive realm, and it was at the height of its power in the fifteenth century. But its system of government was so weakly organised that it was destined gradually to fall into chaos. Bohemia had been for centuries more or less nominally a part of the kingdom of Germany, and her king was actually one of the seven electors who chose the Emperor. There had been a great outburst of Bohemian patriotism at the time of the Hussite revolution, which had made Bohemia an independent State, and it seemed as if Bohemia was going to play an important part in the life of Europe. The kingdom of Hungary had long carried on a very gallant struggle against the Turks, and the Magyars, who formed the ruling race in Hungary, were full of patriotic spirit, and had created a system of parliamentary government not unlike that of England. But Hungary was not destined to become a real Nation-State, because the majority of her population consisted of subject races, who were treated as inferiors and kept quite apart from their Magyar masters ; [1] and real nationhood is only possible when antipathies of this sort between various sections of the population have ceased to exist. In the far north the three kingdoms of Sweden, Norway and Denmark had been united in a single realm since 1397. But their union was a forced one, and was soon to break asunder. Nevertheless both Sweden and Denmark were, after a time, to play a considerable part in the affairs of Europe, as Nation-States.

Thus one of the main features of this age was that a great part of Europe, in the west, the east and the north, was divided into more or less consolidated Nation-States, whose peoples were bound together by the sentiment of national patriotism. But in the centre of Europe, and in the south-east, there were great regions where the national tie did not yet exist. The most important of these regions were Germany and Italy, and their divided condition was to form the chief source of unrest and war throughout the modern period of history.

Italy in the fifteenth century was enjoying the greatest period of her history. She was the wealthiest and the most highly civilised of all European countries. The sailors and the traders of her great ports, especially Venice and Genoa, controlled the bulk of the rich traffic in the luxuries of the East, and traded with them in all parts of Europe. Her merchants were the chief financiers and

[1] See the racial map, Atlas; Introduction, p. 31.

moneylenders of Europe. Her factories in Lombardy and Tuscany supplied the world with fine stuffs, and beautifully tempered arms, and all kinds of artistic objects. The wealth of her merchant princes surpassed that of the greatest kings of Europe, and her poets were everywhere admired and imitated. Above all she produced in this period the most wonderful succession of great painters, sculptors and architects that the world has ever known; the principal art galleries of Europe to-day pride themselves beyond everything upon their collections of pictures painted by the Italians of this age. But the wealth, prosperity and brilliant civilisation of Italy were gravely endangered by her political disunity, which was soon to bring ruin upon her. Instead of being organised, like France and England, as a unified Nation-State, she was divided into a multitude of petty States, ruled in most cases by despots.[1] Five of these stood out above the rest. In the south was the despotic kingdom of Naples and Sicily. In the centre were the papal lands, or States of the Church, ruled despotically by the Pope, with the advice of his College of Cardinals. Further north was the Republic of Florence (centre of all the noblest artistic activity), which, without wholly abandoning republican forms, had fallen under the practically despotic rule of the great bankers, the Medici, whose arms, the three golden balls, are to be seen to-day over every pawnbroker's shop in England. In the north-east the great trading city of Venice had conquered considerable territories on the mainland and many dependencies along the coasts and in the islands of the Mediterranean. She was ruled by a close oligarchy of great merchants; and her wealth aroused the envy of the world. Finally, the central plain of Lombardy was controlled by a powerful despot, the Duke of Milan. If these five States could have been held together they might have defied the greed of the European sovereigns. But they could not; and because of their disunion ruin befell Italy in the next century.

The condition of Germany[2] was in some ways worse than that of Italy. Nominally Germany was a single kingdom, with an elective king who bore the title of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and a Diet consisting of the seven electors, the various ruling princes, and representatives of the self-governing towns. In reality neither the

[1] See the map of Italy, Atlas, Plate 17 (*c*).
[2] See map, Atlas, Plate 23 (*b*).

Emperor nor the Diet had any effective power. The multitude of great and little princes, and the free cities, were sovereign within their own territories; could make war at will, ally themselves with external States, make their own laws, hold their own courts, coin their own money. Many of these independent princes were bishops and abbots; and the ecclesiastical States of Germany held among them about one-third of the total area of the country. The map of Germany under these conditions was incredibly confused. Only a few of the States covered an area greater than that of an English county, and many were very much smaller.

The chief lay States were those of the Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, the Duke of Bavaria, and the Archdukes of Austria. The last named belonged to the Habsburg family, which had steadily grown in importance, and which was to be, during the whole of the Modern Age, one of the most important factors in European politics. Two successive princes of this house held the imperial title during the fifteenth century; it was henceforth to be practically hereditary in their family. But although the Habsburgs were the most powerful of the German princes their territories were still small, and they were quite unable, as yet, to hold their own against the Nation-States of the West.[1] But the Habsburgs had a remarkable knack of marrying heiresses, and they never displayed this talent more successfully than in the period we are reviewing. Maximilian, afterwards Emperor, married the heiress of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy; and this marriage ultimately gave to the Habsburg family all the provinces of the Netherlands, which the Burgundian dukes had gradually acquired. Then Maximilian's son Philip married the heiress of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; and his son Charles, born in 1500, was thus the heir of the Austrian lands, of the Burgundian lands, and of the united kingdom of Spain.[2]

We are looking forward a little in speaking of this extraordinary accumulation of territories in a single family. But it was looming ahead at the end of the fifteenth century, and it explains the rapid rise of the Habsburgs to a very menacing position in Europe.

[1] The growth of the Habsburg lands in Germany is shown in Atlas, Plate 25 (*a*).

[2] For the empire of Charles v., see Atlas, Plate 8.

§ 3. *The Turkish Peril.*

A further aspect of European politics remains to be noted. All through the Modern Age one of the most perplexing problems of European politics, and one of the most frequent causes of war, has been the presence of the alien and uncivilised Turkish Empire in the south-east.[1] It was during the period with which we are dealing that this noxious and desolating power first established itself in Europe. The Turks were a people of Mongolian stock, who came from Central Asia. They had been converted to Mohammedanism, but they never showed any of that capacity for a high civilisation which was so remarkably exhibited by other Mohammedan peoples, notably the Arabs, and those Indian peoples who accepted Islam. The influence of the Turks upon the life and culture of the Mohammedan world when they became its leaders was indeed altogether disastrous, and they were largely responsible for the lamentable decay of the once brilliant civilisation which had marked the lands of Islam. They were splendid fighting men; but they have never in all their history shown excellence of any other kind.

Turks had conquered the greater part of Asia Minor in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. But their power had soon become disorganised. In the thirteenth century, however, a group of them in the north-west corner of Asia Minor, known from one of their leaders, Othman, as the Ottoman Turks, began to conquer their neighbours, and at the beginning of the fourteenth century they found a first foothold in Europe, on the Gallipoli peninsula. At that period the Eastern Roman Empire, which had had its capital for a thousand years in the city of Constantine, was in the last stages of decrepitude; and the Serbians and the Bulgarians—Slavonic tribes who inhabited the northern part of the Balkan peninsula—had shaken off the yoke of the Greeks of Constantinople. In the middle of the fourteenth century it seemed as if the Serbians, under their great king, Stephen Dushan, were going to conquer the whole peninsula. Unhappily he died in 1355; and soon after his death the tide of Turkish invasion swept down upon his people. The Serbians resisted with great gallantry, but in 1389 they were defeated at the disastrous battle of Kossovo, and this defeat sealed the fate of the Balkans. During the next half century almost the whole peninsula

[1] The growth of the Turkish Empire is shown in Atlas, Plate 25 (*b*).

was subjugated by the Turks; and the Greeks, the Serbians, the Bulgarians and the Rumanians were brought under the hideous Turkish yoke, from which they were not to escape for five hundred years. The Turks contemptuously left the decrepit empire in Constantinople to the last; but in 1453 that ancient and glorious city was stormed, and became the capital of the Turkish Empire. Europe had paid little attention to these events. The Venetian traders, indeed, were alarmed and offered some resistance, but they soon made their peace on being given favourable trading conditions. The West was a little excited when the last of the Eastern emperors came to beg for assistance to save Constantinople, and there was some talk of a crusade. But the days of crusades were over; the European States were too much preoccupied with their own affairs; and the desolating ascendency of the Turk was allowed to establish itself over all the lands south of the Danube. This was not the least unhappy result of the death of the dream of the unity of Christendom.

§ 4. *The Political Contrast between England and Europe.*

Such in very slight outline was the new Europe with which the Modern Age opened, and in whose complicated affairs the peoples of the islands were to play a growingly important part. It was a Europe which consisted of a few powerful and consolidated Nation-States, a few possible Nation-States, like Poland, which were not yet consolidated, and an immense number of tiny principalities. All these States, great and little, regarded themselves as sovereign masters of their own concerns; they had all ceased to believe in the desirability of a supreme authority enthroned above them, and enforcing upon them the same moral laws; their rulers had all, in a greater or less degree, persuaded themselves that in the relations between States moral considerations can have no weight. Moreover nearly all these States were despotically governed. The few nominal republics, like Venice, were controlled by close oligarchies of leading men. In the Empire and in Poland the monarch was elective, but the elective character of the monarchy in these States was felt to be a great source of weakness. In most countries the old mediæval 'Estates,' which had been the source of parliamentary institutions in England, still survived. This was so in France, in Aragon and Castile, in Hungary, and in the German principalities.

But the estates were felt to be a source of weakness rather than of strength, because they were a check upon the vigour and efficiency of the monarch; they were summoned as seldom as possible, and were everywhere save in England becoming a more or less unreal form. Everywhere the anarchy and tumults of the last two centuries had given birth to the idea that a strong monarchy represented the only efficient means of enforcing order and peace within the State, of protecting it against aggression from without, and of enabling it to increase its power. Europe in the Modern Age was to be everywhere save in England governed by despotic rulers; and this state of things lasted in nearly all countries throughout the Modern Age and down to the nineteenth century.

Only in England did there exist an organised system for the control and limitation of the royal authority, and even in England, after the tragic experiences of the previous century, the nation was glad to allow to an able and efficient king a very high degree of independent power, in order that he might maintain peace. But this did not mean that England was ready to pass under a purely despotic system of government. Parliament still existed, and all its powers remained unimpaired, even if they were left dormant. Though Parliament no longer desired or attempted to control the working of the king's government in detail, it still had the sole power of granting taxes, and its approval was necessary for all laws. It might vote taxes very readily to an efficient king, but they must not be too burdensome; it might very readily give its approval to the laws which he desired, but they must be reasonable laws; and no English sovereign ever ventured wholly to disregard these powers of the national representative body. This was a very profound distinction between the condition of England and that of all other European countries, even during the period when the power of the Crown was greatest. And a still more marked distinction was that the King of England, unlike the King of France, had no permanent standing army to enforce his will, or to enable him to override public feeling. But more important even than this was the fact that in England all the king's agents, to whom the execution of his will was entrusted, though they were appointed by him, were not professional administrators dependent upon his favour for their livelihood; they were unpaid country gentlemen, the Justices of the Peace, who were fully in touch with the feelings and desires of their neighbours, and who could not be compelled to do anything

that outraged public feeling. Therefore, however great the king's personal power might become, it could never be a mere arbitrary and despotic power. The government of England was, and always remained, in a real sense a free government, deeply influenced by national feeling.

If we ask ourselves what had been the effect upon the four nations of the islands of the long period of training which they had undergone, we are first struck by the fact that one of the four had attained a far more advanced state of development than the other three, all of which had much to learn from their greater and more fortunate neighbour. It was in England, and not as yet in Wales, Scotland or Ireland, that the habits of life and modes of organisation had been developed which were to determine the future growth and character of the world-wide British Commonwealth.

In England, to begin with, as in no other part of the islands and no other country of Europe, the mass of the population had won their freedom from the dominion of chieftains and feudal lords, and were for the most part subject only to the laws of the land. These laws might be cruel or unjust, but they were the laws of the land, not the arbitrary will of individuals.

In England, again, to a degree unknown elsewhere, the Reign of Law existed ; that is to say, it was only by process of law that any free man could be legally constrained to any particular act, or damaged in life or limb or property. The supremacy of law had indeed often been violently overridden during the disorders of the previous age ; but the principle had been established, and it needed only firm and strong government to carry it into full effect. Now this is the foundation of political liberty. Even in the midst of the anarchy of the fifteenth century, the great lawyer, Sir John Fortescue, in his book on the *Governance of England*, could boast of this sovereignty of law as one of the supreme glories of his country.

In England, yet again, ordinary men of all ranks of society were called upon to co-operate in maintaining the law and adjusting it. The functions of police were carried out by the elected constable and other officers of the villages ; and for all serious offences every freeman had a right to have his case decided by the verdict of his fellows.

In England, further, there was a widespread participation of freemen in the management of common affairs. The most noteworthy illustration of this was to be found in the

manifold activities of the country gentry, acting as Justices of the Peace. But it was to be found elsewhere, for example in the co-operative work of the manor courts by which the agricultural affairs of village communities were directed: and these manor courts were now attended, not by defenceless serfs, but mostly by freemen. It was to be found also in the work of parish vestries, where all the freemen of the parish were entitled to meet yearly, to determine various matters such as the repair of the church, the management of little charities, and sometimes the state of the local roads. These features were not all peculiar to England, but it is certainly true that a larger proportion of the nation's manhood took part in the co-operative direction of common affairs than in any other country.

In England, finally (and this is perhaps as important as anything), there was no caste system, no unbridgeable gulf at any point in the hierarchy of society, such as existed in nearly every other country. The free peasant might grow into a substantial yeoman by thrift; the yeoman, if wealthy enough, would rank with the class of knights or country gentlemen; the country gentleman was separated by no impassable gulf from the great nobles, whose younger sons, instead of bearing noble rank as in other countries, sank at once into the rank of plain gentlemen; the thrifty master-workman might become a substantial merchant; the merchant class included many men of knightly family; and, if he bought enough land, or distinguished himself in the service of the State, the merchant or his son might become a peer of the realm. Distinctions of class existed, and were often sharply emphasised; but there was no cleavage between them recognised by law. The English society was the only society in Europe, at the opening of the Modern Age, of which this can be said.

These were the most distinctive features of the English people. They were to be extended, as time went on, to the other nations of the islands. And, more than anything else, they were to fix the character of the work which was to be achieved by the British peoples in the great new age now about to open.

BOOK III

THE BEGINNING OF THE MODERN AGE: THE REFORMATION, AND THE OPENING OF THE SEAS (A.D. 1485–1603)

INTRODUCTION

THE sixteenth century was a turning point in the history of the island peoples, and the events of this century very largely determined the whole course of their future history. It was a fortunate thing that in an age so critical the direction of English affairs fell into the hands of a succession of the ablest princes who have ever occupied the English throne. All the Tudors had great qualities; Henry VIII. and Elizabeth had gifts of a very high order indeed—courage, resolution, imagination, subtlety and daring. They were purely English, and genuinely patriotic. They had an intuitive understanding of their subjects. And for these reasons they were rewarded with a devoted loyalty, which was not shaken even by their manifest failings. They were trusted with a degree of independent power which no English ruler had enjoyed since Edward I., or was ever to enjoy again. Hence their rule has been described as the 'Tudor despotism.' But, as we shall see, this phrase is misleading. The Tudors never attempted to overthrow the system of self-government which had been created in England. They ruled through Parliament and the justices of the peace; and were able to get their own way because they were trusted—because their way was, on the whole, the way which the nation desired to follow. Hence England, the most powerful of the four nations, faced the many and grave perils of the new age as a united nation, inspired by a very strong sense of national unity, and under extremely powerful leadership.

There are four main features upon which the student should keep his mind fixed in studying this period.

The first is the growing strength of the tendency towards the unification of the four nations. The complete constitutional union of Wales with England was effected in the reign of Henry VIII. It is the first of the many 'unions' which have formed landmarks in the history of the British Commonwealth. The real conquest of Ireland was begun by Henry VIII., and practically completed by Elizabeth, though it was carried out in so unhappy a way as to leave

a heritage of future trouble. Although war between England and Scotland continued to fill the first half of the period, the two countries were gradually drawing together. The Reformation made them partners in a common danger; and the most fortunate of royal marriages prepared the way for the union of the two crowns, which took place in 1603. In 1485 the prospect of unity among the four nations seemed very remote. In 1603 it was practically achieved, never (we may hope) to be broken again.

The second feature of the period is the influence upon the life and institutions of the island peoples of that vast upheaval which is known as the Reformation. Its effects in England, Scotland and Ireland were widely different, partly owing to differences of national character, but mainly owing to the sharply contrasted circumstances of its introduction into each of these countries. In England it was directed and controlled by the monarchy, acting through Parliament; it was predominantly political in character, and drew much of its strength from the sentiment of national independence; it ended in a characteristically English compromise; and it turned the Church into a sort of department of the State. In Scotland it was carried out from below, in the teeth of royal opposition, and, although it was deeply affected by political factors, it rested far more upon popular enthusiasm than it ever did in England. For that reason it took an extreme and a democratic form. The Scots became a nation deeply versed in the knotty problems of theology, and therefore intellectually acute. They obtained also, in the Presbyterian form of Church government, a training in self-government which their political institutions had never given them. In short, the Reformation affected the Scottish people far more deeply than the English. It remoulded their national character, and altered the course of their destiny. In Ireland the Reformation came as a change forced upon the people from without by a very cruel conqueror. It therefore achieved no victory, but only added to the existing evils of the country.

The third feature of the period is the part played by the island peoples, and especially by the English, in the common life of Europe. It was in this period that European history began to be, what it has continued to be ever since, the story of the rivalry of consolidated Nation-States for leadership or dominion. And the policy of England now began to be fixed on the lines which it has followed ever

since. It was the policy of abstaining from any attempt to secure dominion on the Continent, because the Hundred Years' War had shown the futility of any such enterprise, but at the same time of preventing any single power from attaining a position of overwhelming supremacy. This is the policy of Balance of Power; and it has led England (and later Britain and the whole British Commonwealth) to resist to the utmost every attempt on the part of any single power to attain world-supremacy. There have been four such attempts in modern history, and in resisting each the islands have taken a leading part. The first of these attempts was that of Spain, and it falls into this period. Its culmination was the defeat of the Armada.

The fourth feature of the period was the opening of the seas, and the beginning of those overseas adventures of the islanders which were to lead in the long run to the creation of the world-wide British Commonwealth. These events were vital for our whole story. The first stage, covering the later years of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth, was marked by the great explorations, mainly due to Spain and Portugal, which revealed to Europe the vast lands of the East and West, but left all these inexhaustible resources to be enjoyed as a monopoly by the two powers which had mainly discovered them. The second stage, covering the second half of the sixteenth century, was marked by the growing boldness of English sailors in challenging this monopoly, first by piratical raids or by attempts to discover new sea-routes, and finally by open war. Here, again, the culmination of the story was to be found in the defeat of the Spanish Armada. This momentous struggle, which was one of the turning points in the world's history, broke the monopoly of Spain. It opened the seas of the world not only to English sailors and traders, but to the sailors and traders of all nations. It established for the first time the Freedom of the Seas. And it made possible the creation of overseas settlements by the island peoples. With the extremely doubtful exception of Newfoundland, no oversea settlement had yet been made when the period ended in 1603. Nevertheless the underground foundations of the world-wide British Commonwealth had been laid; and on these foundations building was to proceed very rapidly in the next age.

CHAPTER I

THE RESTORATION OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

(A.D. 1485-1529)

ENGLAND, WALES, IRELAND—Henry VII., 1485: Henry VIII., 1509.
SCOTLAND—James IV., 1488: James V., 1513.

§ 1. *The Privy Council and the Re-establishment of Order.*

AFTER the battle of Bosworth Henry VII.[1] was faced by the dull but vitally important task of restoring order and good government after the anarchy of the previous century. The task was no easy one, for the habit of turbulence was deeply rooted. Men of all ranks bore arms, and used them too readily. Restless northern gentlemen of the Yorkist faction eager for a change of government, London workmen or apprentices indignant at the favours shown to German or Italian foreigners, Cornish miners and farmers who saw no reason why they should be taxed for wars on the Scottish border—all were too quick to try to remedy their own grievances by force. 'There is no country in the whole world,' said a Venetian observer, 'where there are so many thieves and robbers as in England, insomuch that few venture to go alone in the country except in the middle of the day, and fewer still in the towns at night, and least of all in London.' That was the result of a century of disorder: the habit of accepting the Reign of Law, and of trusting to the law for the redress of grievances, had been terribly undermined. It had to be restored before England could resume her interrupted progress, and it could only be restored by firm government.

Henry VII.'s task was made easier by the fact that the great nobles, whose lawlessness and whose bands of armed retainers had been the chief source of disorder, had almost destroyed one another. In Henry VII.'s first Parliament only twenty-seven lay peers were summoned to attend the

[1] There is a life of Henry VII. by James Gairdner in the Twelve English Statesmen Series.

House of Lords.[1] Under these circumstances it was possible to carry out effectively the prohibition of 'livery and maintenance' for which Parliament had so often and so vainly asked. On the other hand, although many of the knightly class were still unruly, the bulk of the nation, the country squires and merchants who filled the House of Commons, and the workmen and peasants in town and country, desired nothing so much as good government, and were very ready to see the king's authority strengthened as a means of maintaining it.

Henry VII. had been raised to the throne practically by a coalition of the Lancastrians with the many Yorkists who were disgusted by the iniquities of Richard III. His marriage to Elizabeth, the daughter and heiress of Edward IV., was part of the arrangement, and it was hoped that this marriage would put an end to the long dynastic strife. But it takes a turbulent country a long time to settle down, once the habit of obedience to the law has been unsettled; and the first twelve years of the reign were full of plots, riots and fighting. Henry had taken the precaution of locking up in the Tower the young Earl of Warwick, who was the only direct male representative of the Yorkist line; this unfortunate youth remained in prison for fourteen years, until, in 1499, he was executed on a trumped-up charge as the only means of putting an end to the Yorkist plots. But his imprisonment did not deter the defeated faction. They put forward impostors—Lambert Simnel (1486-7), the son of an Oxford tradesman, who pretended to be the Earl of Warwick, and Perkin Warbeck (1492-7), the son of a Flemish boatman, who pretended to be Richard, Duke of York, the younger of the princes whom Richard III. had murdered in the Tower. Both gave Henry much trouble; but while Simnel got some support from the surviving Yorkist nobles in England, and was able to fight at Stoke (1487), a battle which practically destroyed the Yorkist party, Warbeck had few English followers, and was easily defeated and captured when he tried a landing; he depended wholly upon the support of the great Yorkists in Ireland, upon the help of Edward IV.'s sister, the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, and upon the aid of Scotland; and he spent nearly all the years of his notoriety in wandering from court to court. There were other conspirators also, but they need not trouble us. From 1487 onwards Henry

[1] Not more than six of these are directly represented in the peerage of the twentieth century.

VII.'s throne was quite secure, though the conspiracies (of which Warbeck's was the most serious) worried him from time to time, and especially influenced his foreign policy.

The main work of this king was, indeed, the restoration of efficient government, and his main instrument in this work was his Privy Council, which he filled, not, like his predecessors, with great nobles, but with hard-working practical administrators, churchmen, knights and lawyers. Henceforward this very assiduous and industrious body was the real centre and heart of the government of England, and its very willing local agents were the Justices of the Peace, unpaid gentlemen of the country, who were proud to be the king's helpers in restoring good government and repressing disorder. That was the essence of the Tudor system: government by the Privy Council, acting through the justices, and all under the real control of the king; and for a long time it worked admirably. In the Litany of the English Church (which comes down to us from the Tudor age), the 'Lords of the Council' and the 'Magistrates' (that is, the justices of the peace) are the only ruling authorities for whom special petitions are offered; Parliament is very significantly omitted.

For Parliament no longer presumed to control the ordinary course of government, as it had attempted to do in the time of Richard II. and Henry IV. This was mainly because it was no longer itself under the influence of great nobles, as it had been in those days, and therefore was no longer used by a faction out of power as an instrument for attacking the faction in power. It was more than content to leave full power and responsibility for the execution of the laws in the hands of the king and his chosen councillors, and to confine itself to what was held to be its own proper business—the making of laws and the voting of taxes. Even in these spheres it was willing to go far to meet the wishes of a king whom it could trust. To Henry VII. and his successors it voted substantial revenues for life; and it made generous response when asked for special grants for special needs. But this did not mean that Parliament had abdicated its powers; on the contrary, Henry VII. and his successors knew that they would have trouble if they allowed themselves to get seriously out of touch with the feelings of the nation, and it was only because they were tactful and popular monarchs, whose policy was generally approved, that they got so much of their own way. They did not summon Parliament so frequently

as it had been summoned in the Lancastrian period; Henry VII. summoned it only three times in the last ten years of his reign, and Henry VIII. went without a meeting for eight years (1515-1523). But nobody resented this, so long as the government was efficient and successful: attendance at Parliament was indeed a costly burden from which men were glad to escape. And the Tudor kings were wise enough not to attempt to override the legal privileges of Parliament, either in taxation or in legislation. Thus, though Parliament fell into the background during this period, it did so largely by its own consent, because it trusted the king and his council; but all its legal powers remained unaffected, and on the questions about which its members felt they were entitled to speak, such as the state of the Church, or the needs of trade, or the problems of agriculture and labour, or, above all, the burden of taxation, Parliament repeatedly showed that it was very much alive, and could not be easily overridden.

It was, then, the king and his council who formed the real centre of the government of England throughout this period, and not Parliament. And the main work of the council was to bring the forces of disorder under control. For this purpose they very strictly prohibited the maintenance of armed bands by even the greatest nobles. And as the ordinary law courts had been proved to be too weak to exercise adequate control over the great men and their followers, the council obtained from Parliament in 1487 special jurisdiction to deal with such cases, and with all instances of improper interference with the ordinary course of law. Practically the Act of 1487 set up a new court, closely connected and sometimes almost identical with the Privy Council, and known as the Court of Star Chamber. Its powers were not strictly defined, and its procedure was not bound by pedantic usages. It served an invaluable purpose in re-establishing the Reign of Law, and thoroughly deserved the popularity which it continued to enjoy until, under the Stewart kings, its jurisdiction, being no longer needed, began to seem oppressive.

One of Henry VII.'s main objects was the acquisition of a substantial revenue, such as should save him from the dependence upon Parliament which had weakened his predecessors; and this was wholly in accordance with the desires of Parliament itself, which disliked having to vote taxes, and still clung to the idea that so far as possible 'the king should live of his own.' The wholesale confiscation

of great estates which had resulted from the Wars of the Roses greatly enriched the Crown, and an enactment of Henry's first Parliament rescinding all alienations of royal lands since 1454 ensured that Henry should reap the full benefit of the confiscations. With these resources and the other traditional revenues of the Crown he was able, by economical management, easily to cover the ordinary expenses of government without recourse to special taxation. In the later years of the reign, when the love of money gained upon him, he allowed a great deal of unjust and even illegal exaction to be carried on in his name, especially by the notorious Empson and Dudley, two hard-working and unscrupulous members of the Privy Council. When Henry VII. died he had not only restored order, he had accumulated a great treasure, said to have amounted to four and a half millions of pounds—an immense sum for that age.

§ 2. *The Splendour of Henry VIII. and Wolsey.*

Thus his brilliant successor, Henry VIII.,[1] began his reign (1509) as the wealthiest prince in Europe, and was able to play a splendid part, such as his heart desired. Henry VIII. was perhaps the most arresting personality in the whole long line of English kings. He was, according to the Venetian ambassador, 'as handsome as Nature could form him,' and full of strength and animal spirits. He was as good an archer as any of the yeomen of his guard, a skilful wrestler, a splendid horseman, and a lover of all field sports. Withal, though blunt and masterful, he was very good-natured and easily approachable. Such a figure was sure of universal popularity, and 'Bluff King Hal' kept the warm affections of his subjects even during the darkest episodes of his reign. But he was also a highly cultivated man; could play 'on almost every instrument,' and composed jolly ballad tunes, as well as religious music; could speak several languages; and was very well read, especially in theology. In short, he was as well equipped intellectually as physically, and earned the respect of scholars and musicians equally with that of sportsmen and soldiers. With all his joviality, he never forgot his royal dignity. No one ever dared to take liberties with him. He had a very proud and high spirit, and an immense self-confidence; and even his most trusted ministers, even a Wolsey or a Cromwell,

[1] There is a good illustrated life of Henry VIII. by A. F. Pollard.

always knew that the king was master, however much latitude he might allow them, and that he was neither to be cozened nor bullied into any course of action that he did not like. Above all, Henry was a thorough Englishman; and he had an instinctive understanding of his fellow-countrymen's ideas and desires. What wonder that a king so splendid and so masterful, and withal so rich, should have the complete loyalty of his subjects, and be allowed to do almost as he pleased, and to lead them into strange courses! Never has England been nearer to absolute monarchy than under this brilliant and masterful king. Yet even Henry VIII. never dreamt of overriding or disregarding Parliament. He did not need to do so, because Parliament was cheerfully pliant to his will, and gave its assent to even his most tyrannical acts. The reign of Henry VIII. thus completed the work of Henry VII., by bringing back all England into cheerful obedience to its government, and by raising that government high above all rivalry from nobles or other discontented elements.

Young, rich, handsome, and full of the joy of life, Henry VIII. was determined to enjoy himself, and to play a splendid part in the exciting drama of European politics. He was content, during the first twenty years of his reign, to leave the detailed business of government in the hands of his servants, and especially of the great Cardinal Wolsey,[1] the son of an Ipswich grazier, whose immense abilities had led him from promotion to promotion, until, from 1515 to 1529, he obtained practically complete control of all the business of the country, at home and abroad. Archbishop of York, Chancellor of England, Cardinal and Papal Legate, Wolsey seemed to control at once State and Church, while the king enjoyed himself with jousts, dancing, hunting, pageantry, and the excitements of foreign campaigns. 'The Cardinal is about forty-six years old,' wrote the Venetian ambassador in 1519, 'very handsome, learned, extremely eloquent, of vast ability, and indefatigable. He alone transacts the same business as that which occupies all the magistracies, offices and councils of Venice. He is thoughtful, and has the reputation of being extremely just; he favours the people exceedingly, especially the poor, hearing their suits and seeking to despatch them instantly.' He maintained a splendour of life equal to the greatness of his power, with a household of five hundred persons,

[1] There is a life of Wolsey by Bishop Creighton in the Twelve English Statesmen Series.

noblemen and knights, stalwart yeomen and grooms in crimson velvet liveries, pages, minstrels, and choirs of singing-boys.

It is worth while to dwell for a moment upon this proud and gorgeous figure of the Cardinal. He was the last great churchman-minister in English history, for after him came the deluge. And beyond a doubt the impressive splendours of the gallant king and his superb minister touched the imagination of the English, and did much to establish the ascendency of the national government over their minds, and to exalt the spirit of national pride. It is no wonder that such a king and such a minister should be allowed a very free hand in the conduct of national affairs, especially as, on the whole, they did their work extremely well. But even Henry VIII. and Wolsey had to learn that there were limits to what is called the 'subservience' of Tudor Parliaments. Their chief interest, as we shall see, was in foreign policy, with which on the whole Parliament did not presume to meddle. Yet in the Parliament of 1523, when large supplies for a war against France were demanded, there was a striking display of independence. One member —afterwards famous as Thomas Cromwell—ventured to make a strong speech against the whole war policy. The debates lasted for seventeen days. Parliament granted much smaller supplies than were demanded. And when the Cardinal, with his glittering train, came down to browbeat them into submission, he was met with courteous obstinacy. There was even some talk of refusing him admission. When he demanded explanations of their conduct from the members, all remained silent; and at last the Speaker, Sir Thomas More, explained that it was not in accordance with the privileges of the Commons to debate their decisions with strangers. Parliament was not going to be browbeaten, or to abandon a jot or tittle of its rights; and Wolsey had to go away discomfited. Here is a convincing proof that the quiescence of Parliament had its limits; and it was only by recognising these limits that even the popular Tudor sovereigns were able to wield their power without restraint.

§ 3. *Growing National Strength.*

In the domestic history of England during the long period from 1485 to 1529, there are few outstanding events that call for notice; it was, as we have said, a period of settle-

ment and preparation. But in several ways the events of this period have a very important bearing on the future.

In the first place, a few burnings and imprisonments showed that Lollardy and dissatisfaction with the condition of the Church were still alive, though no longer so widespread as they once had been; while several episodes showed that suspicion and hostility against the Church were very easily aroused.

The second noteworthy feature of this period was a growing expression of discontent with the changes which were taking place in agriculture. Because of the wealth to be derived from the wool-trade, owners of land had long been tending to substitute sheep-farming for tillage; and this brought about in some districts the break-up of the old system of communal cultivation by the bringing together of scattered strips into more solid enclosed blocks. It also tempted great landlords to enclose areas of the common or waste land which had hitherto been used by all the cultivators of the manor. And as less labour was required for sheep-farming than for tillage this process threw many men out of work, and led to an increase of vagabondage. The process had not yet gone far; it did not reach its height until the middle of the century, after the suppression of the monasteries, and even then the greater part of the land was unaffected by it. But it was already attracting notice, and leading to repeated complaints in Parliament and to attempts at legislation, as early as the reign of Henry VII. Thus the two chief sources of trouble which were to engage the attention of England later in the century, the religious question and the agrarian question, were already emerging.

A third feature of the period was the systematic encouragement of English manufacture, commerce and shipping, for which Henry VII. in especial deserves the highest credit. He made a series of commercial treaties for the encouragement of English trade, and his foreign policy was much influenced by this consideration. The most important of his treaties was the *Magnus Intercursus* of 1496, whereby mutual privileges of trade were exchanged between Englishmen and Flemings. It was followed in 1506 by a treaty so favourable to the English merchants that the Flemings called it the *Malus Intercursus*, or Evil Traffic. There were also disputes with the Germans of the Hanseatic League, who had so long dominated English trade, and had enjoyed a specially privileged position, but who now saw English merchants invading their special preserves in Norway and

the Baltic. The controversy reached no decision; but Henry VII.'s declaration that 'our subjects must be as free in all places belonging to the Hanse towns as the Hanse merchants are in England,' shows that the new strong government was anxious to use its power to support English trade, and that the days of complete foreign ascendency were over. One of Henry VII.'s chief preoccupations was to develop English shipping as rapidly as possible. He gave bounties for the building of large ships, and attempted to limit various branches of foreign trade to English ships.

Lastly, this period may be said to have seen the real foundation of the Royal Navy. Hitherto, though English kings had possessed a few ships, they had mainly trusted to the commandeering of merchant vessels for the purposes of war. It was Henry VIII. who first began systematically to build royal war-vessels, in order to secure the command of the Narrow Seas for his continental wars; and perhaps the year 1512 may be taken as marking the date when for the first time a permanent war fleet guarded the English seas.

In all ways, then, England emerged from this period of settlement stronger, and ready to play a great part. She had got rid of internal turbulence and disorder. She had a powerful and respected government, fully in touch with national feeling. She was rich, and growing steadily more prosperous. Her increasing mercantile marine was showing itself a serious competitor of the older mercantile powers. Her war fleet dominated the seas about her coasts.

§ 4. *England and her Sister Realms.*

In regard to the relations between England and her sister realms the period was one of beginnings, but not yet of achievements.

In *Ireland* the support given by the nobility to each of the Yorkist pretenders in turn made it obvious that something must be done to re-establish the royal authority. But in fact Ireland was in such a state of chaos that a complete reconquest was necessary. 'There be sixty counties inhabited by the king's Irish enemies,' said a rather prejudiced English observer in 1516, 'where reigneth more than sixty chief captains, that liveth only by the sword, and obeyeth to no temporal person save only to himself that is strong; and there be thirty of the English noble folk that followeth the same order, and keepeth the same

rule.' Even within the narrow limits of the Pale there was little order; and its affairs were generally controlled by the powerful Earl of Kildare, whose own lands lay partly within and partly outside its limits. To restore order and establish authority in Ireland would have demanded a great army and a large expenditure of money, which the frugal Henry VII. was not prepared to face. But he could not afford to leave royal authority in Ireland, such as it was, still in the hands of the Yorkist leaders. In 1492, therefore, he deposed Kildare from the deputyship, and tried to make use of the rival family of the Butlers of Ormond[1] to keep the Kildare Fitzgeralds in check. The only result was civil war. It was of no use to ring the changes upon Irish factions.

In 1494 Sir Edward Poynings, a useful and industrious member of the Privy Council, was sent across as deputy with a force of one thousand men and a body of English officials. But Poynings found it impossible to establish the royal authority, with the resources at his command, anywhere outside the Pale. All that he could do was to reorganise and strengthen the government in the four counties of the Pale, which he did with great difficulty. An Irish Parliament summoned at Drogheda adopted voluminous laws for the suppression of private war, the protection of the English colony, and the establishment of closer relations with England. Two of these, known later as 'Poynings' Laws,' were intended to guard against the employment of the Irish Parliament as the instrument of the local ambitions or feuds of the great Anglo-Irish nobles like Kildare. They provided that no Parliament should meet until the king's deputy and the Irish Privy Council had specified the statutes proposed to be enacted, and the king and his English council had approved of them; and that all earlier English laws should have force in Ireland. Thus the Irish Parliament was made entirely dependent upon the English government. Yet this was not resented by the English colonists in Ireland, who were alone concerned. They regarded these Acts as a protection for themselves against Kildare and his like. For the Irish Parliament was still in such a primitive stage of development that it must depend either upon the king or the nobles; and of the two, dependence upon the king was better. The Parliament of Drogheda completed its work by attainting Kildare, who was sent over to England, and kept a prisoner for some months.

[1] See map of Ireland, Atlas, Plate 42 (*a*).

But Henry VII. was not prepared to go on with Poynings' work. It cost too much; the Irish revenues were insufficient to pay even the cost of a garrison. Henry therefore fell back upon the old device, and having (as he hoped) taught Kildare a lesson, he sent him back to rule Ireland once more as deputy. He retained his office, and the old anarchy continued until 1520, when once more an English deputy, the Earl of Surrey, was sent across. But Surrey reported that nothing could be done short of systematic conquest, for which an army of six thousand men would be required, and a systematic policy of English colonisation; and Henry VIII., engrossed in the great wars of Europe, was not prepared to face this programme. After five years of fruitless fighting Surrey was recalled, and once more Ireland was left in chaos; neither subjected, not yet left free to work out a system of government for herself. The Irish question had been opened, but nothing had been done towards its solution.

With *Scotland* also the domestic and foreign policy of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. brought them into very difficult relations. The traditional hostility between England and Scotland, and the traditional alliance between Scotland and France, were as strong as ever; and this meant that Scotland was the natural friend of every pretender to the English crown, and that the outbreak of war between England and France always brought war between England and Scotland. From 1488 to 1513 Scotland was ruled by a king more vigorous and successful than most of his predecessors. But equally with his predecessors James IV. had to fight frequently against baronial conspiracies, often fomented from England, and against the rebellions of Highland and island chieftains. Always in relations with England's enemies, he caused anxiety to Henry VII., who on his side kept up a connexion with some of the traitorous Scottish nobles. In 1491, for example, Henry arranged with one of them to kidnap James and his brother and bring them to England, for £277, 13s. 4d.!

Henry found a better way of dealing with the Scottish question when, in 1502, he gave his daughter Margaret in marriage to James IV. Just one hundred years later, their great-grandson was to unite the two crowns. But the marriage did not bring immediate friendship, and there was constant friction and border fighting during the next years. When in 1511 Henry VIII. joined the great continental alliance against France, known as the Holy League,

James IV. felt himself bound to support his ancient ally by invading England; and he had a further ground of quarrel, in that the fleet which he had been eagerly building was attacked and almost destroyed by the English fleet (1511). In 1513 he invaded Northumberland with the whole force of his kingdom, and, through foolish generalship, was utterly defeated at the battle of Flodden, the most disastrous in the whole gloomy history of Scotland. The king himself, thirteen earls, an archbishop and two bishops, and an unnumbered company of knights and men-at-arms, were left dead on the field. The bitter memory of Flodden echoes through the later history of Scotland, and there is scarcely a family of rank in the Lowlands but counts an ancestor slain in this terrible slaughter, which opened more widely than ever the gulf between the two countries. Worst of all, it brought upon Scotland once more the evils of a minority, and the endless faction fights of the nobility which raged unchecked when a boy-king reigned. James V. was only escaping from tutelage when our period closes (1529); in the previous year the burning of Patrick Hamilton for Lutheran heresy marked the beginning of the Scottish Reformation, and a new era opened in the relations of the two nations.

[H. A. L. Fisher's *History of England from the Accession of Henry VII. to the death of Henry VIII.* is the best modern book on this period; see also Brewer's *Henry VIII.*, and Pollard's *Factors in Modern History*; for Scotland, see Hume Brown's or Andrew Lang's *History of Scotland*; for economic history see Meredith's *Economic History of England*, and Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*. There are two excellent lectures on the period in Stubbs' *Lectures on Modern History*.]

CHAPTER II

THE RENASCENCE

§ 1. *The Meaning of the Renascence.*

WHILE the islands were plunged into anarchy and disorganisation during the fifteenth century, there had been blossoming, in Italy first, and in a less degree in other parts of Western Europe, that efflorescence of literary and artistic activity which is called the Renascence, or rebirth. The name expresses what has always been felt about this wonderful outburst—that it marked a turning-point in human history. One of the greatest results of the re-establishment of peace and order in England (and in a less degree in Scotland and Ireland) was that it gave a chance for the ideas of the Renascence to begin to work freely in the islands.

In one way the name 'Renascence' is unfortunate; it suggests that there had been intellectual sterility or deadness during the Middle Ages, which is far indeed from being the truth. Nor is it right to suppose that the great change in men's thinking and in their way of looking at the world came suddenly. It used to be the fashion to give the date of 1453 for the beginning of the Renascence, because in that year many Greek scholars, driven from Constantinople when that city fell before the Turks, took refuge in Italy, and stimulated the study of the Greek classics. But this is a very shallow way of regarding a vast movement. It is true that a revival of classical learning had a great deal to do with the birth of the new ideas. But the Greek classics were being studied long before 1453; and there were many other factors in the Renascence besides the revived study of Greek. The truth is that the beginnings of the Renascence can be traced far back into the Middle Ages. It was already very active in the fourteenth century; and a great change in men's outlook was already coming about. The enthusiasm of the fifteenth century for Greek studies only gave a special direction to the movement, and the reason why it produced such great

results was that men had been prepared by earlier developments to appreciate what the Greek classics had to teach them.

The most essential feature of the Renascence was the wide diffusion of a new way of looking at the world and at life, which formed a sharp reaction against the conceptions that had dominated the best men in the Middle Ages. This reaction would have come about in any case, and had long been preparing: the revival of classical learning brought it to a head by emphasising the sharpness of the contrast between the outlook of the ancient world and that of the mediæval world. The scholars of the Middle Ages had studied the classics; but they had interpreted them in the light of their own ideas. The scholars of the fifteenth century tried to understand what the ancients had really felt and thought about life and the world. They tried to look at things with the eyes of Sophocles and Plato; and in proportion as they succeeded in doing so, they were driven to realise that in the brilliant and noble civilisation of the ancient world the governing ideas of men had been widely different from those of the Middle Ages. The Greek view of life (as they understood it) attracted and fascinated the Italians of the fifteenth century so completely, that it hastened the change of outlook which was already beginning, and gave to it a special character. Greek studies seemed the key to a new view of the world, and for a time nothing else seemed worthy of attention. All Italy went mad about them. Princes lavished their treasures on the purchase of manuscripts. A knowledge of Greek was the surest passport to honour, and even to high office. And when we reflect what a marvellous and beautiful civilisation that of ancient Greece had been, it is not surprising that the full revelation of it should have dazzled men's eyes.

Wherein lay the main contrast between the ideas of the Middle Ages and the ideas of ancient Greece, which exercised so exciting an influence upon thinking men? The best men of the Middle Ages thought of the world as a place of struggle and of discipline in preparation for another world: the Greeks thought of it as a place of wonder and beauty, which ought to be explored and enjoyed, and they thought little and vaguely about the idea of another world. The preachers of the Middle Ages were apt to regard the beauties of the physical universe as snares for the soul, and man's body as the source of evils and temptations which might lead him to destruction unless he kept it in

subjection: the Greeks thought of the human body as a noble and beautiful thing which ought to be cultivated so that it might be a worthy temple to enshrine man's yet more marvellous mind; they thought of man's capacity for the enjoyment of beauty as something that ought to be trained and made the most of. The mediæval mind thought of truth—the only truth that mattered—as something that was communicated to men by God through His Church, and regarded man's reason as a very imperfect instrument, which ought to be distrusted and condemned if ever it should dare to challenge or question the revealed truth of which the Church was the guardian: the Greeks thought of truth as something that could only be attained by the free and fearless exercise of man's reason, the noblest and the most divine of all his wonderful gifts. For the best minds of the Middle Ages the highest duty of man was to conquer his passions and to subordinate his arrogant will to the will of God by obeying the rules of life set forth by God's Church; for the Greeks a man's highest duty was to make the most of himself, and to develop all his powers of mind and body in the most harmonious way, so that he might enjoy the beauty of the world and be able to seek for truth. To put the contrast in a single phrase, self-repression was the highest ideal of the mediæval world, self-expression of the ancient world. In reality the contrast between the two views of life was not so sharp as these phrases make it appear. Many great men in the Middle Ages revered beauty as an expression of God; and all the best Greeks emphasised the obligation of self-discipline and self-restraint far more strongly than the men of the Renascence generally realised. But the contrast was a real one; and it is not wonderful that the revelation of a conception of life so attractive as that of the Greeks, and so different from that which had long been accepted, should have had an intoxicating effect upon men's minds, and should have led to an extravagant insistence upon the supreme value and significance of man's reason and his powers, and of the alluring beauty of the world.

The name of 'Humanism' has been given to this tendency to emphasise the dignity and worth of man. It is a useful word, though an ugly one; its significance is best realised if we think of it largely as a protest against what we may call the 'Divinism' (to use a still uglier word) of the Middle Ages. There is truth in both views, as the best Greeks well knew, and as many 'Humanists' of the

Renascence period, like Erasmus and Sir Thomas More, knew equally well; but in the excitement of a new revelation most men were apt to be carried off their balance.

The new spirit stimulated men to marvellous deeds, and especially brought about a wonderful outburst of artistic creation, in Italy first, and later and more faintly in other countries of the West. This is not the place for any description of the marvellous work of Italian painters, sculptors and architects in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which was the outcome of the impassioned worship of beauty characteristic of the age; nor can we stop to dwell upon the new movements in literature, the new thought in politics and philosophy, the new speculations in physical science, to which the proud trust in the power of men's reason gave birth. In every field the stimulus was felt. The Reformation in religion was one outcome of the Renascence; the great explorations which we shall describe in a later chapter were another. Everywhere there was a ferment of ideas. And, by a happy chance, one of the most epoch-making of mechanical inventions came just at the right moment to encourage the wide diffusion of the new ideas: Gutenberg and Fust invented printing in the middle of the fifteenth century; and soon the classics were available for all readers, and the pregnant new ideas of the Renascence were everywhere spread abroad.

§ 2. *The Renascence in England.*

The printing-press reached England before the influence of the new thought had had time to exercise much influence in the islands. William Caxton, a London trader, brought over a press from the Netherlands in 1476, and set it up at Westminster; and his services to English thinking were of real importance. Caxton was no mere mechanic. He was a man of letters as well as a practical business man, and he made himself the centre of the dawning intellectual life of England during the reigns of Edward IV., Richard III. and Henry VII. Perhaps his greatest service was that he did not content himself with printing learned works in Latin, but issued a long series of translations of notable works into English; and in doing so did much to standardise the rich and flexible English tongue, and to prepare the way for the great era which was to come. He had the patronage of the most enlightened nobles of the time. One of them, Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, had studied in

Italy, and was a master of the best learning of his age. Tiptoft was an example of that strange combination of high intellectual interests with extraordinary brutality which, as we shall see, was characteristic of the Renascence age: even amid the barbarities of the Wars of the Roses he earned the title of 'the Butcher.'

But it was not until the last years of the fifteenth century that the influence of Greek studies and of the Italian Renascence reached England, and not until very much later that it reached Scotland or Ireland. In 1488 Thomas Linacre came back from Italy fired with enthusiasm for the learning of the Greeks; and on the basis of Greek learning started in England the scientific study of medicine. Three years later his friend William Grocyn, an Oxford scholar, went to Italy to study; and on his return became the centre of Greek studies at Oxford. A little later John Colet, an earnest and eloquent priest, followed in his footsteps; and began, also at Oxford, to apply the study of Greek to the interpretation of the New Testament, brushing away the cobwebs of scholastic interpretation and trying to get at what St. Paul had really meant. The Oxford group attracted to England the greatest scholar of the age, the young Dutchman, Erasmus, who spent many years and made many friends in England; and Erasmus, like Colet, cared most of all to use his learning as a means of purifying men's thoughts about religion and stimulating a 'Renascence' in the Church. And in London all the group found a friend in the young lawyer, Thomas More,[1] the noblest of them all, who, like the rest, was concerned to use his knowledge to bring about reforms in Church and State.

What we have said about the little group who were the real parents of the English Renascence illustrates a marked contrast between the form which the Renascence at first assumed in England and that which it had assumed in Italy. The English Renascence was as yet far less brilliant in its artistic achievement: the only great painter who was working in England in these years was the German Holbein; and the wonderful literary efflorescence which was the crown of the English Renascence did not come until the time of Elizabeth. But the forerunners of the movement in England were deeply concerned about practical and moral issues, which in Italy counted for relatively little.

[1] More's son-in-law, W. Roper, wrote a beautiful little biography of him, which ought to be read.

In none of them was this more clearly shown than in the gentle and noble More. His greatest book (1516), the finest product of the first stage of the Renascence in England, was an earnest criticism of social and political ills, and a glowing picture of an imaginary world in which these ills should disappear. *Utopia* [1] (or Nowhere) is, under the semblance of a description of a State in the newly discovered land of America, at once a criticism of the present and a dream for the future; and it is so tender and so wise that it can still inspire. It was an attempt to think out how the State could be made to yield the greatest amount of happiness to its citizens; and in three respects it was far indeed beyond its age. This noble and tender spirit deplored the fact that the poor lay always at the mercy of the rich, and suffered from their oppression: he comforted himself by imagining a State in which all men had enough, and the desire for possessions was no longer the governing motive of men. He hated religious bitterness and persecution, since (being himself a deeply religious man) he felt that religion ought to be the teacher of mercy and love; so he imagined a society in which there was complete toleration of religious differences. He knew the enrichment of life that came from knowledge, and lamented the ignorance in which the mass of men still lived; in his *Nowhere* all children were wisely trained at the public charge.

More was a personal friend of Henry VIII., who delighted in his wit, his high spirits, and his wide learning; for Henry himself was essentially a man of the Renascence, and a master of the culture of his age. Unhappily the spirit of More and his group was far beyond the apprehension of the full-blooded, self-willed king. Yet Henry and his great minister, the cardinal, were in sympathy with the demand for greater enlightenment; and in their time many schools, inspired by the ideals of the new learning, began to arise. Wolsey himself founded a great college (Christ Church) at Oxford, and a school at his native Ipswich. The schools of the new learning which arose during the next generation were to be the training-grounds of the poets and sailors and thinkers of the great Elizabethan age, and of the political reformers of the age which followed. Perhaps the most famous of these schools was that which Colet established in connexion with St. Paul's Cathedral, when he was appointed its Dean.

[1] *Utopia* was written in Latin, but there are English translations.

§ 3. *Moral and Political Aspects of the Renascence.*

It would be a great blunder to suppose that the earnest and lofty spirit of More and his friends was characteristic of the Renascence movement either in England or elsewhere. For the brilliant achievements of the age had dark shadows; and the darkest of these was a grave relaxation of moral standards, a sort of moral anarchy. This was the natural result of the sudden casting off of old restraints and old ideals of conduct, of the worship of human individuality, and of the claim that every man had a right to develop his own personality unrestrained. Read such a self-revelation as the *Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, a typical Renascence artist, and a naturally honest and generous-minded man, and you will see what sins the worship of beauty and strength could appear to cover: Cellini feels that no apology is necessary for vices in which his temperament led him to indulge, or for crimes into which he was led by self-will. The very definition of *virtu* among the Italians of this age found no place for what we call the higher moral qualities: the man of *virtu* is the man who can by craft and courage impose his will upon stubborn clay or bronze, or upon the still more stubborn human material presented by his neighbours or his subjects. Henry VIII. and Thomas Cromwell were, indeed, far more typically Renascence men than John Colet and Thomas More.

This aspect of the Renascence spirit, this disregard of moral restraints, this passionate egoism, found its most unhappy expression in the sphere of politics. The records of the petty princes of Italy in this age are full of incredible instances of brilliant, ruthless, non-moral cunning and cruelty in the pursuit of power. Rulers learnt to regard themselves as exempt from all moral restraints, and the ideal prince seemed to be a sort of tiger-man, strong, pitiless and cunning, using every device of force and fraud without scruple or misgiving, to impose his will upon subjects or rivals. This view of statecraft is set forth with extraordinary skill in Machiavelli's *Prince* (1513), one of the classics of the age. The assumption upon which the whole treatise rests is that morality has practically no bearing upon politics. And Machiavelli's doctrine was in fact simply a translation into theory of the practice of the age. Not the Italian princes only, but such sovereigns as Ferdinand of Aragon or Francis I. of France held themselves exempt from moral restraints, and acted on the assumption that morals have nothing to do with the

relations of States with one another, or of princes with their subjects, but that ultimately force and cunning are the only determining factors. This was, in effect, the political doctrine of the Renascence, of the period when absolute monarchy was everywhere establishing itself, and when monarchs were refusing to admit the right of any power to control or criticise their actions. It is a doctrine which has ever since had advocates, down to the time when the teachings of Treitschke dominated the mind of Germany in the generation before the Great War. And the almost universal acceptance of this view ought to be remembered when we judge the action of Henry VIII. and Thomas Cromwell, or of Elizabeth.

In politics, as in other respects, the Renascence was in fact a reaction against the ideas of the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages had always held in theory (though theory was often contradicted by practice) that there must be in the world some power charged with the duty of enforcing the moral law of God upon all princes, and they had found this power in the theoretical position of the Emperors, and in the real authority of the Popes. The governments of the Renascence age—even those which remained Catholic—repudiated every claim to restrain or control their action, and in effect repudiated the validity for them of the moral law. But it was only for a time that this attitude was triumphant. Even in the sixteenth century, since man is a moral animal and even absolute monarchs are men, the instincts of decency prevented the worst excesses. And soon the old doctrine, the old ideal of a moral law above the authority of all governments, began to raise its head again ; we shall see it emerging in the form of a system of international law, early in the seventeenth century. Generation by generation it has grown in strength, and it will be part of our business, in later parts of this book, to note its growth, and to trace the part which has been played in its progress, either consciously or unconsciously, by the British Commonwealth.

In the meanwhile it must be remembered that throughout the great age with which we are now dealing the spirit of the Renascence, blended of good and evil, was working like yeast in the rapidly changing world.

[Burkhardt, *The Renaissance* ; Symonds, *Short History of the Renaissance in Italy* ; Seebohm, *The Oxford Reformers* ; Hutton, *Life of More*. The best English edition of Machiavelli's *Prince* is edited by L. A. Burd, with an introduction by Lord Acton. Macaulay has an essay on Machiavelli, and a lecture on the Renascence is included in Lord Acton's *Lectures on Modern History*.]

CHAPTER III

THE NEW ERA IN FOREIGN POLITICS

(A.D. 1485-1529)

§ 1. *The Beginning of National Rivalries : the Wars of Italy.*

One of the distinguishing features of the Modern Age has been that it has been filled with the rivalries of great organised States for influence and leadership in Europe. In this prolonged struggle every State, great or small, has been more or less involved ; every controversy breaking out in any corner of Europe has appeared to concern all governments, because it might affect the 'Balance of Power'; there has been a long succession of wars, involving nearly always a number of the powers ; and the intervals of peace have been filled with restless, suspicious, and often unscrupulous diplomacy. The date commonly taken for the beginning of this inter-State rivalry is the year 1494, when Charles VIII. of France made a sudden raid into Italy, and promptly found himself faced by a combination of other powers, led by the now united kingdom of Spain.

In this long rivalry England, and in a less degree Scotland, were necessarily involved, though owing to their insular position they have not usually been so deeply involved as the continental powers. But the fortunes of the islands have been very deeply affected by this unceasing European strife. Their participation in the fray has been influenced by various motives : frequently by the ancient hostility between England and France ; frequently by anxiety as to the fate of the Netherlands, which look across to England, and in some degree control the North Sea traffic ; sometimes by sympathy with causes which were being fought for on the Continent—the cause of Protestantism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the causes of national freedom and popular government in the nineteenth. Once the old mediæval ambition for conquest in France was fairly abandoned, England has never (unlike the continental powers) desired to make territorial conquests on the mainland. But always, from a very early stage in this

prolonged strife, it has been a primary aim of British policy to prevent any single power from obtaining complete dominion in Europe; and it has been at the moments when such a dominion seemed to be threatening that the interventions of the island peoples in European affairs have been most vigorous and effective. In this sense, but only in this sense, England first, and then united Britain, and then the British Empire, have always stood for what is called the Balance of Power. The importance of the period upon which we are now entering is that it sees the definite abandonment of the old dreams of French conquest, and the entry of England upon what was to become the special British policy of the Balance of Power.

The transition, like all transitions, took place gradually. Henry VII. fought a rather aimless and half-hearted war with France (1488-92), which recalls the old mediæval policy. His object was to preserve the independence of Brittany, the last great feudal State in France. But he willingly let himself be bought off by the treaty of Etaples (1492), thus showing that he did not take his French ambitions seriously. And the fact that in this war he allied himself with Spain and with the Emperor Maximilian shows that the object of the war was rather to check the alarming growth of French power than to acquire French territory.

France was, in fact, manifestly the greatest power in Europe, and her unity was completed by the marriage of Charles VIII. to the heiress of Brittany. Charles now entered upon a career of conquest by putting forward a claim to the kingdom of Naples, which he invaded and conquered in 1494 with surprising ease. But his success brought a formidable coalition into existence against him, including the Pope, Venice, Milan, the Emperor and Spain, and the French rapidly lost their conquests in Southern Italy, which passed for two centuries under the dominion of Spain. Henry VII. joined the anti-French league, but took no part in the fighting. Once again England and Spain were ranged against France; and their alliance was cemented by a treaty of marriage between Catherine of Aragon, daughter of the King of Spain, and Arthur, eldest son of Henry VII. The treaty was concluded in 1497, though the marriage was not celebrated till 1501. Royal marriages played a great part in the foreign politics of the next ten years, and this one was to have momentous consequences. The Spanish alliance was so much valued that when Arthur died, in 1502, a papal

dispensation was obtained to permit his brother Henry to marry the young widow.

But the defeat of the French attack on Naples did not end French ambitions in Italy. In 1499 Louis XII., successor of Charles VIII., again led a French army over the Alps, and occupied the duchy of Milan, which he claimed by inheritance. For some years he maintained possession of his conquest, and in 1509-10 he joined with the Pope, Spain, and the Emperor in an iniquitous attack upon the republic of Venice. But the growing strength of the French was alarming; and in 1511 Pope Julius II. made peace with Venice, and set to work to form a great Holy League to expel the French from Italy. In this league Spain and the Emperor joined, as well as the chief Italian States. The ambitious Henry VIII. now reigned in England, and, being eager to play a great part in the world, he enthusiastically threw himself into the Holy League, and prepared to send English armies into Northern and Southern France. The southern campaign (1512) was a dismal failure. The northern campaign (1513), which was well organised by Wolsey (who thus won the favour of the king), achieved some success, so that Henry VIII. began to dream of conquering or partitioning France. But the anti-French league broke up promptly, as soon as the power of the French in Italy was broken. Henry, convinced that he had been tricked by his father-in-law, the King of Spain, made a profitable peace and alliance with France in 1514, which was sealed by the marriage of Henry's sister, Mary, to Louis XII. Shortlived as it was to be, this was the first instance of an actual alliance between England and France, and it may be said to mark the final abandonment of English ambitions for the conquest of France.

§ 2. *Charles V., Francis I., and Solyman the Turk.*

In the following years the European situation began to change very rapidly. In 1515 Francis I. succeeded to the French throne. He was a young and brilliant man, ambitious, artistic, frivolous, superficial, and devoid of all scruples; and Henry VIII. felt towards him an intense personal jealousy which influenced his policy. Francis signalised his advent to the throne by a raid into Italy, where, after the brilliant battle of Marignano, he reconquered the duchy of Milan, to the acute annoyance of Henry, who thought of responding with an invasion of France.

But the circumstances were not favourable. For next year the cunning old fox, Ferdinand of Spain, died, and was succeeded by his grandson Charles, already master of the Netherlands, and heir to his other grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian.

Charles was a grave and shy boy of sixteen, who was thought to be a fool, and seemed to compare poorly with his dazzling rivals, Henry and Francis. He was to show, in a long reign full of troubles, that he had a patience, a courage, and a diplomatic skill which made him a greater figure than either of them. The relations of these three young sovereigns were to form for a generation the most important question in European politics. Their rivalry soon had a chance of showing itself in a curious way. In 1518 the Emperor Maximilian died. His family estates, the Austrian lands of the Habsburgs, passed of course to his grandson, Charles. But his imperial title could only be bestowed by the votes of the German Electors. Charles, Francis and Henry all became candidates for this, the greatest of all earthly dignities. Charles was elected, as was almost inevitable.

And now the Emperor Charles v. stood forth as the ruler of the most extraordinary empire that had ever existed in Europe.[1] As heir to the House of Burgundy, he was master of the Netherlands and their rich and prosperous cities, and of the Franche Comté on the eastern border of France. As heir to his Spanish grandparents, he ruled over the united kingdom of Spain, over the southern part of Italy, and over the vast empire in the New World which Columbus had discovered for Spain, though it had not yet begun to pour out the stream of wealth that afterwards made it so valuable. As heir to the Habsburgs, he was master of Austria and other lands in South-Eastern Germany. As Emperor he had a theoretical title to the obedience of the other German princes. It seemed as if, with these vast resources, he ought to be able at last to give the imperial title a real meaning, to make himself master of Germany, and even of all Europe. The only obstacles that seemed to stand in his way were the French and English monarchies. His own territories almost surrounded France ; while England was linked by a traditional alliance to the owner of the Netherlands, and the Queen of England was the Emperor's aunt.

But Charles v.'s strength was more apparent than real.

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 8.

His widely scattered dominions had distinct governments and were jealous of one another. Communications between them were interrupted by France on land, and dependent upon the English by sea. Spain was almost ready to rebel during the early years of the reign; the rich Flemish cities were very unruly; the German princes were quite unaccustomed to obedience. And these were by no means the worst of Charles' troubles. In 1517 the Reformation had begun in Germany, and by 1521, when Charles went to that country to try to establish the imperial authority on a firmer foundation, the whole country was already in an uproar. In the Diet of Worms, at which the young Emperor met the magnates of the land, he was confronted by the troublesome monk, Martin Luther, who was the origin of all these turmoils. He laboured in vain to restore the authority of the Church, or even to establish a religious truce: the conflict between the new and the old religions ruined all chance of his becoming master in Germany, and eventually (1552) brought about his downfall.

Finally in these very years the Turkish Empire, under the rule of the most famous of all the sultans, Solyman the Magnificent, was becoming more threatening than it had ever yet been.[1] In 1521 Solyman captured Belgrad, the warden-fortress of the Danube. In 1526, on the dread field of Mohacz, he destroyed the armed might of the kingdom of Hungary and slew its king; and for two hundred and fifty years thereafter, two-thirds of Hungary remained under Turkish rule. The Turks were threatening Vienna, the capital of the Austrian domains. It looked as if they might even overrun the whole of Europe. To Charles fell the main burden of defence against the Turk, though, to ease his task, he transferred his Austrian lands to his brother Ferdinand (1521).

These difficulties made the rivalry between Charles v. and France less unequal than the map makes it appear, and Francis did not hesitate to make use of them. He intrigued with the Protestant princes of Germany, and at the same time he intrigued with the Pope, who feared Charles' power in Italy. He even made open alliance with the Turks, to the scandal of Christendom, and Turkish galleys, loaded with Christian slaves, were welcomed in the harbour of Toulon. During the whole of Charles' reign the unceasing hostility of France was the greatest of his many troubles. It is impossible not to sympathise with

[1] See the maps, Atlas, Plates 8 and 25 (*b*).

the hard-pressed Emperor. But it is impossible also not to recognise that the resistance of France saved Europe from the danger of a universal monarchy, which could not have lasted long, but which would have done much harm. It also gave the Reformation time to get itself well rooted in Germany and other lands.

§ 3. *The Balance of Power.*

What was to be the attitude of England in this acute conflict between England's ancient enemy France, and the vast but loosely organised power which seemed to threaten her from all sides? That was the main problem which exercised Henry VIII. and Wolsey during the years 1519-1529. Both parties in the conflict were eager for English co-operation. But the advantage to English trade of friendly relations with the ruler of the Netherlands, the ancient tradition of hostility to France, and the more recent friendship with Spain, made an alliance with Charles V. seem the more natural, especially in the early days, before his strength was fully revealed. In 1520 the French and English kings had an interview at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, when they and their suites strove to outdo one another in lavish magnificence, and the interview left Francis in the belief that he could at any rate count on English neutrality. But Henry and Wolsey had already privately agreed to join the other side; their decision being helped by Charles V.'s promise to support Wolsey's candidature in the next papal election.

When war between the two great powers broke out in 1522, an English expedition once more landed in France. And once more, as an inevitable consequence, the Scots made an ineffective raid into England to support their French allies. But the war was not pursued with any vigour on the English side, because Charles V., with the aid of the Constable of Bourbon, a revolting subject of France, achieved such overwhelming successes as to frighten his allies. In the battle of Pavia (1525), he not only crushed the French army in Italy, and finally deprived France of the duchy of Milan; he even took the French king himself a prisoner. After this victory, it seemed, for the moment, as if Europe lay at Charles V.'s feet, and as if the old dream of the universal empire might be revived. To prevent this, to preserve the independence of France and the Balance of Power in Europe, Wolsey and his master carried out a

sudden and complete reversal of English policy, and made a close alliance with France. Because the see-saw had gone too violently down on one side, they threw their weight on to the other; and they undoubtedly helped to bring about the revival of France which soon took place.

It may fairly be said of English foreign policy during this period that, on the whole, it was more showy than advantageous; try as he would, Henry VIII. was never able to play a dominating part in European affairs, but was at most only a makeweight. It is often said, also, that Wolsey was influenced mainly by personal motives, and that, having supported Charles V. in order to be elected Pope, he deserted him in 1525 because Clement VII. had been chosen in his stead. This may have helped to influence his policy. But the outstanding fact of the period is that under Wolsey's guidance England had broken away from mediæval ideas of foreign policy. English policy was no longer governed by such simple and unrealisable ambitions as the conquest of France. It was now increasingly governed by the consideration of the position in Europe as a whole, and it had arrived at the conclusion that English interests would suffer if any single power were permitted to dictate to all Europe. The doctrine of the Balance of Power had emerged; and with its emergence the modern era in foreign relations had begun.

[Fisher's book, already referred to under Chapter I.; Creighton's *Wolsey* (Twelve English Statesmen); Johnson, *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*; Abbott, *Expansion of Europe*; Armstrong, *Charles V.*]

CHAPTER IV

THE UNVEILING OF THE OUTER WORLD

§ 1. *The First Great Discoveries.*

While the fruitless and confusing wars of the European States, which fill the pages of history books, were dragging out their dreary course, another series of events was taking place which was to have an infinitely more momentous influence upon the destinies of the island peoples. The most extraordinary outburst of exploring activity that has ever taken place was transforming the aspect of the world. Within the generation between 1490 and 1523 the twin continents of the New World had been discovered, the coast-line of Africa had been explored, the waters of the Indian Ocean and the China Seas had been for the first time ploughed by European keels, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans had been mapped out, and the round world had been circum-navigated. No such transformation in the aspect of the world has ever taken place as took place in this generation. The area open to the exuberant enterprise of the European peoples was multiplied a hundredfold. Western civilisation, hitherto limited to Europe, began that gradual conquest of the world which has filled the last four centuries. A new and far more fruitful field of rivalry was opened to the European nations, whose narrower conflicts we have just been observing. Above all, the centre of balance in the civilised world had begun to shift; and the British Islands, hitherto on the outer fringe of the known world, were soon to find themselves in the centre of the main streams of world traffic and enterprise. It is obviously of vital importance that we should realise the nature of the great movement which was to have so profound an influence upon the fortunes of the island peoples.

Although mediæval Europe had always used the luxuries that came from the East, and above all from India, it had known practically nothing of the lands from which these luxuries came, but had been content to pick them up on the shores of the Mediterranean or the Black Sea from the

Eastern caravans that brought them thither. A few daring travellers, like Carpini, Rubruquis, and the great Marco Polo,[1] brought back wonderful tales from Mongolia and Cathay and the hot lands of India, which every one knew of as the land of gems and spices; but the real ignorance of even learned men regarding the shape of the Old World may readily be seen by a glance at any map of this period.[2]

A variety of circumstances during the fifteenth century combined to bring about a sudden zest for exploration. The discovery of the mariner's compass made distant sea voyages possible even beneath hidden or unfamiliar stars. The eager, questing spirit of the Renascence found a natural expression in geographical exploration. The revival of classical studies reminded men that Aristotle had asserted that the earth was a globe, and this was reinforced by the astronomical discoveries of Copernicus: the map-makers therefore began to apply their notions of the shape of the earth's land-masses to the globular theory. The study of Herodotus disclosed the fact that the ancient Phœnicians had sailed round Africa, leaving by the Red Sea, and returning by the Straits of Gibraltar. The increasing prosperity of Europe demanded a greater abundance in the supply of the luxuries which came from the East; and meanwhile the disturbances caused by the Turkish conquests interfered with (though of course they did not put a stop to) the already insufficient volume of these goods that came by caravan.

Finally the Portuguese, having wholly freed their country from the Moors, were tempted to pursue these secular enemies into Northern Africa, all the more because the strength of Spain gave them no room for expansion at home. The motives of this enterprise were at first largely religious, and they were strengthened by legends. Somewhere in Eastern Africa, it was believed, a Christian emperor, the famous Prester John, still held sway, and the Portuguese dreamed of somehow joining hands with him, and winning a great victory for Christianity by taking the Moslem world on the flank. These were wild and unpractical dreams; but no dream was too wild, and no enterprise too daring, for the men of this age, when the whole world seemed to lie open to the adventurer.

During the first half of the fifteenth century, inspired by a prince of their royal house, Henry the Navigator,

[1] See Book II., Chapter I., p. 88.

[2] See the mediæval maps reproduced in Atlas, Plate 46 (*c*) and (*d*).

the Portuguese had taught themselves to build ships that could stand the rough usage of the outer seas, and had begun to push gradually southwards round the coast of Western Africa.[1] The barren shores of the Sahara Desert delayed them long, but before Prince Henry died in 1460 they had rounded Cape Verde, and soon afterwards they reached Sierra Leone, where the coast began to trend hopefully eastward. Here gold-dust and negro slaves were to be got, and exploration began to reap its material reward. But then the coast began to lengthen out endlessly southwards; and almost a generation passed ere, in 1487, Bartholomew Diaz found at last a point at which the trend of the coast was unmistakably eastwards. He called it the Cape of Storms: but when he returned, his master, King John II., realising that now the route to India was open, renamed it the Cape of Good Hope, and began to make great preparations for exploiting this superb opportunity.

Ten years passed before the new route was actually used. In the interval a still greater enterprise had been set on foot. A Genoese sailor in the Portuguese service, Christopher Columbus, convinced himself that India could be far more quickly reached by sailing due west across the Atlantic, than by following the slow and toilsome route of the Portuguese. Queen Isabella of Castile, more than a little jealous of the Portuguese achievements, thought it worth while to risk three little ships in testing his theory. After a voyage on the trade winds of only two months, Columbus touched land at one of the Bahama Islands, October 12, 1492. He had found a new world without knowing it; and though he made two more voyages, and on the third reached the mainland of South America, and the mouth of the mighty river Orinoco, he never knew what he had done, but died in the conviction that the land he had reached was part of Asia. He had also laid the foundations of a new empire for Spain. At first it was limited to the island of Hispaniola (Hayti); but though the gentle natives of this and other West Indian islands were forced to labour as slaves for their mysterious lords from across the sea, they produced for a long time little wealth—nothing that could be compared with the vast profits of the Portuguese Eastern trade. The Pope, by an award of 1493, divided the new discoveries between Spain and Portugal by drawing an imaginary

[1] The course of the explorations summarised in this chapter is illustrated by the map, Atlas, Plate 47.

line north and south through the Atlantic; but as yet, and for a generation to come, the Portuguese share seemed vastly the more valuable.

§ 2. *The Portuguese Power in the East.*

The whole resources and energy of the Portuguese people were thrown into their great enterprise, which opened when the great navigator Vasco da Gama, after a voyage of thirteen months, reached the coast of India at Calicut in August 1498. It was a vastly more difficult and dangerous enterprise than the two months' voyage of Columbus, and it immediately led to far more brilliant results. On the coast of India the Portuguese found many petty princes, who were easily dominated; and they had no trade rivals save the Arab merchants, who had hitherto carried the products of India to the ports of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The Portuguese soon controlled the principal Indian ports, where they purchased the merchandise of India in their king's name, and shipped it to Lisbon. Here the fine stuffs, gems and spices of the East were now to be got far more abundantly than before. Lisbon became the commercial capital of the world, displacing Venice; and the ships of all nations resorted to its busy and prosperous wharves.

During the first twenty years of the sixteenth century, while the potentates of Europe were squandering blood and money on the fight for Italy, the Portuguese were organising an extraordinary commercial empire in the East. The real organiser of their power was Affonso de Albuquerque, governor of the Portuguese Indies, 1509-15. He conquered the valuable island of Goa, on the west coast of India—a highly defensible position with a splendid harbour, which he turned into the capital of the Portuguese Empire. Here alone large numbers of Portuguese emigrants settled, strictly enforced their own religion upon the native subjects, and by intermarriage gave rise to a considerable population of mixed birth. Other Portuguese 'factories' or trading stations were dotted round the coasts of India and Ceylon; there were garrisoned ports and calling stations at intervals along the east coast of Africa; there were strong posts at the mouths of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, almost closing these ancient routes of commerce. Further east a station at Malacca controlled the gateway to the Malay Archipelago, where the rich Spice Islands, the centre of

the most lucrative traffic in the world, passed under Portuguese control. Eastwards again the Portuguese later opened up a trade with China, where they acquired a fortified base in the island of Maçao ; and they dealt also with the island empire of Japan. The whole of the trade between the East and Europe was in their hands, and it brought into Lisbon an incredible stream of wealth.

The Portuguese empire in the East was never more than a trading monopoly, and it was absolutely dependent upon the maintenance of naval supremacy. Except in Goa, there were no settlements, and no considerable territorial conquests. Moreover, from the first this vast trade was turned into a monopoly of the Crown ; and, while it brought wealth into the country, it did nothing to develop the enterprise and initiative of the Portuguese people. It was a marvellous enterprise for a little nation. But it overtaxed the nation's strength, and the process of decay set in very early.

In the West, by a happy accident, the Portuguese at the same time got possession of an invaluable territory. In 1500 one of their captains, Cabral, on his way home from an Indian voyage, was driven out of his course, and touched upon the coast of Brazil. Here, after a time, a real colony was established. The coastline of Brazil was parcelled out into a series of principalities which were granted to great Portuguese nobles. They were given absolute power over the native population, who soon began to melt away. They brought out Portuguese emigrants in considerable numbers, but members of the master-race were unwilling to undertake heavy labour under a tropical sun. So the Portuguese began to transport negroes from their West African trading stations to their Brazilian plantations, and this was the beginning of negro slavery in America.

§ 3. *The Spanish Empire in America.*

Meanwhile the modest beginning of the Spanish empire in the West Indies had undergone a wonderful expansion. The greater islands had all been explored and occupied. The shores of the Gulf of Mexico had been marked out. A footing had been obtained on ' Terra Firma,' or the ' Spanish Main '—the north coast of South America. Vasco Nunez de Balboa had crossed the Isthmus of Panama, and discovered that a vast ocean separated the New World from Asia (1513). The most intrepid of all the explorers, Magellan,

a Portuguese in the Spanish service, had made his way down all the coast of South America, seeking for a passage through to Asia. He had found the tortuous and perilous straits which still bear his name (1520); pushing ever westwards, without map or chart, he had crossed the mighty Pacific, and reached the Philippine Islands and the Malay Archipelago; and the remnants of his heroic company, after their captain's death, had found their way home by the familiar Portuguese route round the Cape of Good Hope, after the most courageous voyage in the whole history of exploration. It is recorded that, when the ragged handful reached a Spanish port, their first duty was to go barefoot to do penance in church, because they had lost a day in going round the world, and had observed all the feasts and fasts of the Church on the wrong days. But the main result of these wonderful voyages was that the chief features of the distribution of the world's surface between land and water were now known; and the Spaniard realised that it was a new world that was in his grasp.[1]

This was at first a disappointment, for it was the fabled wealth of the East that the Spaniard had hoped to tap; and there was little wealth to be made out of the naked natives of the Caribbean. Some of them were timid and soft, so that they died out annoyingly under the stress of forced labour; others were ferocious and untamable; and it soon became necessary to replace them with negroes from Africa, according to the Portuguese plan. But if the first acquisitions in the New World brought little wealth, and were disappointingly poor in gold, they at least presented a field for adventure, which delighted the hearts of the fierce and daring Spanish gentlemen. The story of the deeds of the *conquistadores*, as these romantic adventurers were called, surpasses belief or imagination. They were incredibly brave, incredibly brutal, incredibly avaricious. And always they justified their worst ferocities by the claims of religion. They were fighting the battle of the cross against the infidel. It adds to the reputation of their valour that they were convinced that evil spirits filled the air about them, and battled against them in the impenetrable jungles, the uncharted seas and the wild mountains through which they forced their way.

Soon the daring of these fierce adventurers was rewarded by the discovery of lands of inexhaustible wealth. Her-

[1] Compare the two maps, Behaim's of 1492 and Schöner's of 1523, shown in Atlas, Plate 47 (*b*) and (*c*).

nando Cortez and a handful of men, boldly advancing into the plateau of Mexico, found there a civilised people, the Aztecs, among whom the precious metals were so abundant that they were used for the common implements of life. In two years (1519-21), this little band conquered the whole empire, wiped out its cruel religion in blood, enslaved its people, and took possession of the mines of Potosi, from which, thenceforward, a stream of bullion poured annually across the Atlantic into Spain. Presently a still wealthier empire, that of the Incas of Peru, was discovered and conquered by the detestable and bloodthirsty tyrant Pizarro, in the ten years following 1525; and from the second and still richer Potosi another stream of wealth began to flow through the Pacific ports over the isthmus of Panama, whence it was shipped in the annual treasure-fleet from Nombre de Dios to Cadiz.

Mexico and Peru—these with their mines formed the main strength of the Spanish empire in the New World;[1] and here a mixed population, sprung from the marriage of Spanish soldiers with Aztec and Peruvian women, began to arise. But Spanish daring spread further still. Up among the Andes of Peru, Orellana found the head-waters of a mighty river, the Amazon: he followed it down in boats for nearly two thousand miles, till it brought him into the Atlantic. Farther south, Spaniards discovered the fertile plains of the La Plata river, and the rocky coastlands of Chile. Farther north Hernando de Soto made a marvellous journey through the forests of Florida, westwards over one river and another, till he reached the vast stream of the Mississippi.

But the full extension of the Spanish empire had not yet been reached at the period with which we are dealing. The amazing wealth of Mexico and Peru was only beginning to be disclosed; and it was not until 1542 that the Emperor Charles v. took in hand the organisation of this vast dominion, and tried to check the rapacity, the cruelty and the destructive feuds of the men who had built it. The first half of the sixteenth century was the age of the *conquistadores*. The second half was the age of the organisers. We are not here concerned to explain in detail how the gigantic Spanish empire was organised and governed. But one main fact must be noted. The settlers in America were allowed no share of control over their own affairs. Even the governors,

[1] See the map of Spanish South America, Atlas, Plate 58 (*a*), and of Central America and the West Indies, Plate 53

sent out from Spain, had little freedom of action. Everything was under the rigid control of the Council of the Indies sitting at Madrid; and its policy was to secure the absolute mastery of the Crown over all the resources of the New World. Not only were other nations to have no share; not only were no commercial relations with other peoples permitted: even Spaniards were not allowed to exploit these vast resources, except under royal licence and strict royal control. And the result of these restrictions was that the abounding enterprise which the Spaniards had earlier shown rapidly died down, and the huge empire, which included some of the most prosperous regions of the world, fell into a condition of stagnation with astonishing quickness, and became little more than the region within which the Spanish king's mines produced bullion to meet the cost of his European wars.

§ 4. *The Modest Enterprises of England and France.*

It was not to be expected that the other Western peoples should permanently allow the Portuguese and the Spaniards to enjoy an undisputed monopoly of the outer world. But they were very slow to take action. Columbus, indeed, had sent his brother, Bartholomew, to England, to ask Henry VII.'s support for his great idea, and the English king had not been unfavourable; but in the meantime Isabella of Castile had taken up the project. A little later Henry VII. gave his patronage and some financial backing to the Genoese sailor, John Cabot, who, with his three sons, made two voyages from Bristol and explored the coast of North America from Labrador to Virginia, being actually the first explorer to touch on the continent of the New World. But this promising beginning was not followed up; in truth the maritime resources of England were scarcely yet sufficiently developed to be ready for great enterprises. Nor did France play a much larger part. In 1523 Francis I. lent ships to another Italian sailor, Verazzano, who explored part of the North American coast; and in 1534 the Frenchman Cartier made his way into the estuary of the St. Lawrence, and gave the name of Canada to the land he found. He thought, as Cabot had thought before him, that the Gulf of St. Lawrence might be the opening of a north-west passage, parallel to the channel which Magellan had discovered a few years earlier; and the dream of a north-west passage, by which the northern peoples could reach

the East by a route of their own without conflicting with Spaniards or Portuguese, continued to haunt men's minds for a long time to come. But nothing was done to follow up these beginnings, except that English and French fishermen sometimes found their way to the cod fisheries of the Newfoundland banks. The world was in fact content for the present that the first explorers should keep what they had found; all the more because they were supported by the papal award, which was still universally respected. Not until the Reformation did men begin to dream of a direct challenge to the Spanish dominion.

The expansion of the British peoples had not yet begun. But the transformation of the aspect of the world by the great discoveries had made it possible; and therefore, though the islanders played so small a part in the task of exploration, it forms an essential chapter in their history.

[There is an excellent lecture by Lord Acton on the subject of this chapter in his *Lectures on Modern History*; E. J. Payne, *European Colonies*; Abbott, *Expansion of Europe*, vol. i.; Beazley's *Dawn of Modern Geography*; Markham's *Columbus*; Guillemard's *Magellan*; Stephens' *Albuquerque*; Danvers' *Portuguese in India*; Beazley's *J. and S. Cabot*; Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* and *Conquest of Peru*; Bourne's *Spain in America*; Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*.]

CHAPTER V

THE REFORMATION IN EUROPE AND IN ENGLAND

(A.D. 1517-1559)

Henry VIII., 1509: Edward VI., 1547: Mary, 1553: Elizabeth, 1558.

For more than two centuries, as we have seen, there had been a deep and growing resentment among the English against the powers claimed by the Pope over the English Church and the way in which these powers were exercised; and this resentment had produced a long series of measures for the restriction of papal authority. There had been an equal dissatisfaction with the condition of the Church, with the wealth, pride, corruption and idleness of many of the bishops, priests and monks; and these evils, instead of diminishing, had grown steadily worse. There had even been, in the time of Wycliffe and his followers, a questioning of some of the fundamental doctrines of the Church, and an anxiety to repudiate the superstitions with which its practice had been encrusted during the Middle Ages; and at the end of the fourteenth century it had almost seemed as if the Protestant Reformation was going to be anticipated in England by a century and a half. Sharp persecution had failed to crush out the Lollard movement, and Lollards were still being burned or imprisoned at intervals in the reign of Henry VII. and the early years of Henry VIII. But the revolutionary doctrines of the Lollards were not widely held in England. It was not the doctrines of the Church or its mode of worship which had, as yet, aroused any widespread discontent; it was the high claims of papal supremacy, which seemed inconsistent with the proud national spirit of England, the too frequent laxity and ignorance of churchmen, and their vast and often ill-employed wealth, which alienated men's minds.

§ 1. *The Reformation in Europe.*

This dissatisfaction was by no means limited to England, but was almost universal throughout Europe. In Bohemia it had led early in the fifteenth century to a formidable

revolt, the Hussite movement, which in many ways anticipated the Protestant revolution. In Italy and in Spain it was not so strong as elsewhere; in Spain the long struggle against the Moors had kept alive something of the spirit of the crusades; in Italy the Papacy was regarded as a sort of national institution, and a very profitable one, while the best Italian minds were engrossed by artistic interests, and left religious questions largely on one side. Yet even in Italy the revolt of the conscience of Christendom against the condition of the Church had been expressed by the fiery preaching of the monk Savonarola. But the dissatisfaction was deep and growing in France, in Scotland and in the Scandinavian countries. It was deepest of all in Germany, just because Germany was a weak and divided country, which had no powerful government to protect it against the worst abuses, as the kings of France, and the kings and parliaments of England, could in some degree protect these countries. A serious attempt had been made in the first half of the fifteenth century to carry out a great reform by means of a series of General Councils. But this had failed, and the failure had intensified the universal discontent; while the character of the popes of the following generations had made it worse. Popes like Julius II. or Leo X. or, worst of all, the infamous Alexander VI., had appeared to be altogether indifferent to the spiritual needs of the world, wholly wrapped up in political intrigues or in their territorial ambitions as Italian princes, and just as unscrupulous and immoral in pursuing these intrigues and ambitions as any of the lay princes with whom they dealt. And in the midst of all this deepening discontent had come the Renascence, with its spirit of free inquiry, its refusal to be bound by old forms and rules, its adventurous daring.

Although in Italy the scholars of the Renascence concerned themselves little about religious questions, in Germany and England the new spirit of inquiry found its chief vent in this sphere. The Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old and New Testaments were revised and critically studied. The extravagances of the mediæval scholastic philosophers were attacked. The Humanists of Germany, the Netherlands and England—such men as Reuchlin and Erasmus, Colet and Sir Thomas More—cared more about religious questions than about all others, and laboured to bring about a purification of the Church. And the critical attitude of the scholars strengthened the hostility of the mass of ordinary men.

Since the heads of the Church had not done anything, and did not seem likely to do anything, to remedy the ills of which all men complained, it was inevitable that the prevailing discontent should find some means of expressing itself. Either there must come an outburst of reforming or destructive energy from below; or the lay princes, who were everywhere establishing their despotic power over the lives and property of their subjects, might be tempted to make use of this current of opinion to obtain control over their subjects' consciences by substituting their own authority for that of the Pope, and to enrich themselves by annexing the vast wealth of the Church. Both of these elements, popular discontent and princely acquisitiveness, were everywhere combined in the great upheaval known as the Protestant Reformation.

But there was a wide difference between a desire for reform in the Church and a willingness to support its dissolution into fragments or to sympathise with the violence of hot-headed partisans. The unity of the Church had long been the sole expression of the unity of Christendom and civilisation. The spiritual supremacy of the Pope, whatever its abuses might have been, had been the sole means of enforcing the moral law upon all States in their relations with one another. For that reason many of the most earnest preachers of the need for reform, like Erasmus, had no sympathy with the violent methods by which the reformers proceeded; and Sir Thomas More, the noblest Englishman of his time, the free spirit that dreamed of *Utopia*, was ready to die on the scaffold rather than give his assistance in the rending of the 'seamless garment' of the Church.

The movement of the Reformation began independently and almost simultaneously in Germany, Switzerland and France. But it was in Germany that it obtained the most rapid and striking triumphs, partly because the grievances of the German people against the Church were greater than those of other peoples, and partly because the divided condition of the country gave it a freer field of action. In united countries like England, France or Spain, such a movement would be either crushed by the power of government, or taken under its protection and control. But the Emperor, nominal ruler of all Germany, was distracted by his desperate wars with France and with the Turks; and the numerous independent princes and free towns were therefore able to follow the course that suited them best.

Some of them were influenced by genuine conviction; others simply by the chance of winning power and plunder, which the attack on the Church afforded; the majority, perhaps, by a mixture of both motives.

In 1517 the bold monk Martin Luther, Professor of Theology at the Saxon University of Wittenberg, was roused to make a protest against the open sale of 'indulgences' (or exemptions from the performance of penance) as a means of raising money for the building of St. Peter's Church at Rome. To the door of the church at Wittenberg he affixed a long series of theses, or propositions, regarding indulgences, which denied the power of the Pope to issue them, and asserted that forgiveness for sins was not to be obtained by payment, or penance, or priestly intercession, but only by faith. The theses of Wittenberg were rapidly spread, by the aid of the printing press, throughout Germany, and were everywhere welcomed with enthusiasm. They led to a lively controversy, which all Europe watched with intense interest, and in the course of which Luther found himself forced from point to point, until he had boldly taken up the position of repudiating the papal authority altogether, as well as other fundamental doctrines of the Church. In this controversy Henry VIII. of England, proud of his theological learning, eagerly took part, and in 1521 published a book against the heresies of Luther. The Pope rewarded him by granting him the title 'Defender of the Faith,' which is still borne by every British sovereign, and in the form 'Fid. Def.' or F. D. appears on every British coin. The Pope himself excommunicated Luther (1520), who replied, to the delight of half Germany, by publicly burning the bull of excommunication, and thus openly defying the papal authority. The Emperor attempted to stop the alarming movement by an edict issued at the Diet of Worms (1521); Luther defied the Emperor also. He was only able to act thus boldly because he was protected by his master, the Elector of Saxony, who had the support of many of the lay princes of Germany: without, as yet, committing themselves too deeply, the princes saw many possibilities of advantage to themselves in this great upheaval. Luther was removed by the Elector to a safe retreat in the castle of the Wartburg, among the forest-covered mountains of Thuringia, whence he poured forth a stream of pamphlets, in the intervals of translating the Bible into German for the use of common men.

But during Luther's retirement the movement began

to get out of hand. Excited mobs took to destroying images, sacking churches, and mobbing unpopular churchmen. There was universal social unrest. Notably the oppressed peasants saw in the new gospel a message of hope for themselves, and broke into revolt; religious revolt and social revolution were as closely associated as they had been in the time of Wycliffe and the Peasant Revolt in England. The princes of Germany were alarmed; and, fearful of losing their protection, upon which his whole cause seemed to rest, Luther violently condemned the peasants, as well as the Protestant extremists who were getting the upper hand in many districts, and gave his whole-hearted support to the brutal and ferocious measures by which the princes crushed out the revolt. Henceforth Lutheranism became a princely religion, whose tendency was to place the minds as well as the bodies of the mass of men at the mercy of their rulers. Even before the Peasant Revolt of 1525, in trying to answer the question where the ultimate spiritual authority should lie if the papal supremacy were overthrown, Luther had practically answered that the responsibility must rest with the secular sovereigns, who were answerable to God alone for their deeds. Such a doctrine of course made the new movement very attractive to ambitious rulers, and persuaded a rapidly increasing number of German and other princes to give it their support, all the more because they were now free to seize for their own use the rich property of the Church. But it was in the end ruinous to the spiritual fervour of the new religion, and before many years had passed the Lutheran form of Protestantism had begun to be supplanted by another form, Calvinism, in all those countries where the new ideas had to fight for their existence against principalities and powers.

Meanwhile, however, the reformer's surrender to the princes had secured the existence of his doctrines in Germany. When in 1526 Charles V., free from his troubles for the moment after his victory over Francis I. at Pavia (1525), tried again to grapple with the religious revolution, he found that a large number of the most powerful German princes had identified themselves with it; and though his influence succeeded, at the Diet of Speyer, in carrying a new edict against the heretics, there was a substantial minority of princes ready to 'protest' against its execution. Their formal protest gave the name of Protestants to their party. New wars with France, however, together with the terrible

pressure of the Turks, prevented Charles V. from even attempting to carry out his edict, and the moment passed when the crushing-out of German Protestantism might still have been possible.

During the next twenty years Charles V. was engaged in almost endless wars. He often had to count even the Pope among his foes, and was therefore unable, until it was too late, to get a General Council of the Church summoned, by whose means, as he had hoped, the whole controversy might have been settled and the unity of Christendom restored.

When at length he was free from his troubles in 1546, he did summon a council, the famous Council of Trent; and he did attempt to restore his own authority in Germany, and almost succeeded. But it was too late; for during these years Lutheranism had not only got itself firmly rooted in Germany, it had spread into all the neighbouring countries; a new and more militant form of Protestant faith and discipline had been worked out by the stern and logical Calvin in Geneva; even Charles' own dominions in the Netherlands were honeycombed with the new doctrines; and in England, Denmark, Norway and Sweden strong kings had seen the advantage to be derived from the attack on the Church, and in one form or another had carried their peoples along with them into the great revolt.

It is, of course, foolish to trace so vast a movement of the human spirit as the Reformation wholly to political causes. No political factors could have ensured its victory unless the minds of men had been ready for it, and unless it had possessed some power of appealing to their consciences. But political factors undoubtedly made its rapid triumphs possible. And the prominence of political factors largely defiled it, and deprived it of the character of a purely religious movement. In no case was this so apparent as in the case of England.

§ 2. *The King's Divorce and the Breach with Rome.*

It was not to be through the influence of Lutheran ideas, or by a process of gradual conversion, that England was to break away from Rome, but by the high-handed action of her masterful king. The Defender of the Faith plumed himself upon his orthodoxy, and continued to do so to the day of his death. He would have no dealings with Lutheran heresy, and did his best to prevent the dissemination of heretical ideas. The breach with Rome, which forms the

first stage in the English Reformation, was a purely political act, due wholly to the determination of a wilful king to have his own way at all costs. It was carried through comparatively swiftly, and with surprisingly little trouble, because Henry VIII. was not merely wilful, but extraordinarily shrewd, resolute and ruthless, and because, as he well knew, the bulk of the nation, whose feelings he thoroughly understood, had no tenderness for the papal supremacy, though they had as little anxiety as the king himself to change their beliefs.

The root of the whole matter was Henry's desire to be divorced from his queen. Catherine of Aragon had been his wife for eighteen years. She had borne him a daughter, Mary, but no son; and the lack of a male heir made the Tudor dynasty seem insecure. Moreover Henry had fallen in love with a lady of the court, the sprightly and voluptuous Anne Boleyn. Under these circumstances the king's tender conscience was awakened. He remembered that Catherine had first been married to his elder brother, Arthur. Surely this made his own marriage invalid? It was true that a papal dispensation had been obtained, But had the Pope fully understood? And in any case, could the Pope grant a dispensation from a divine law, set forth in the Book of Leviticus? The royal conscience must be relieved; and in 1527 Cardinal Wolsey was ordered to obtain a divorce from the Pope.

Wolsey did his best, carrying on negotiations through two long years. But unfortunately the Pope, Clement VII., was now at the mercy of the Emperor, who was the injured queen's nephew, and he dared not do what Henry required, especially as he believed it to be unjust. The most that Wolsey could obtain was a commission to try the case along with another cardinal, Campeggio. But the inquiry was deliberately delayed by Campeggio, and finally adjourned without a decision. Henry's anger knew no bounds. His essentially tyrannical nature got the mastery. Without thought of Wolsey's long years of service, he stripped him of all his offices and nearly all his wealth, and started an action against him for a breach of the Act of Præmunire (1393), in that he had acted as papal legate. He had done so with Henry's full assent. It was in 1529 that Wolsey's vast power suddenly collapsed. Next year he was saved from even more complete ruin by death.

The fall of Wolsey made Henry feel the delightful sense that his own power was irresistible. Henceforth he played

the part of a pure tyrant; but always of a tyrant who knew what he was doing, and how far he could safely go. Wolsey's place as Chancellor was given to that very perfect gentleman, Sir Thomas More, the witty and gentle scholar whom the king had loved. But More was obviously not the man to carry out the new plan which was shaping in the king's mind: the plan of frightening the Pope into submission by unchaining Parliament for an attack on the Church. This plan was pursued for four years with the utmost cunning, but entirely without success. The more obstinate the Pope showed himself, the more obstinate the king became, until he ended by abolishing all papal authority in England, and annexing it to the Crown. Then at last, having burned down a venerable house to roast his pig, he was able triumphantly to cancel his own marriage, and to give Anne Boleyn a brief hour of splendour before sending her to the scaffold. Having thus established his power, and proved it irresistible, he found it fatally easy to do other terrible deeds at the dictation of his tyrannous passions.

The king was the engineer of this tremendous revolution. But he needed instruments. The chief of his instruments was Parliament, which was by tradition very ready to attack the Church, and was genuinely devoted to its masterful prince. During the long period of seven years (1529-1536), the 'Long Parliament of the Reformation' carried out his will in all particulars, accepting momentous changes in the law, or sentencing the king's victims to death by Acts of Attainder, with scarcely a quaver of opposition. But even Henry VIII.'s parliaments needed management; and for this work, and for all the dirty work of these years, Henry found an admirable instrument in Thomas Cromwell, formerly a servant of the fallen cardinal.

Cromwell was an extraordinary example of the romantic vicissitudes possible to a man of the Renascence age. He was the son of a Putney blacksmith. He had travelled in Flanders and Italy, but even Italy could teach him nothing in the unscrupulous arts of Renascence statecraft. He had been in turn a soldier, a lawyer, a merchant and a moneylender. Then suddenly he became the feared and hated master of a great kingdom, and the wrecker of ancient institutions. He raised his master to such a pinnacle of despotism as no English king had ever attained before, or has ever reached since. But no one knew better than Cromwell himself that he was the creature of his master's breath. When he had served his turn, he was flung aside

like an old shoe, just as his patron the cardinal had been before him; and died on the scaffold to which he had sent so many better men. He was courageous, full of ingenuity, untiringly industrious, attentive to every detail, without sentiment, without pity, without scruple and without remorse; in short, an ideal organiser of despotism, and an ideal tool for evil deeds.

The course of the great revolution of 1529-1536 is easily traced. First in 1529 Parliament was encouraged to attack some of the profitable abuses of the Church—probate and mortuary fees, and the pluralities for which popes often granted licences. But an embassy sent to Rome to report these events, and to report at the same time that the Defender of the Faith was most orthodoxly forbidding Lutheran pamphlets, and had ordered Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English to be publicly burned, found the Pope still ruefully inflexible about the divorce.

So the king and Cromwell next (1530) began a direct attack upon the English Church, to prove to the Pope that no resistance need be expected here. A prosecution was started against the whole of the clergy of England for having broken the Act of Præmunire by recognising Wolsey as legate. They had recognised him by the king's orders, but that made no difference; they had broken the Act, and the penalty was confiscation of all their property. But Convocation was told that they might be forgiven if they voted a very large subsidy, and formally recognised the king as 'the sole protector and supreme head of the Church and Clergy of England.' Ruefully enough they gave way, only adding the timid phrase, 'as far as the law of Christ allows.' The tyrant was learning how easy it was to get his way. But still the Pope did not yield.

Now Parliament was again brought into play, petitioning against the abuses of the Church courts, and the legislative powers exercised by Convocation. In trepidation and at the eleventh hour Convocation prepared a scheme of reform. It was of no use. Convocation was told that it must agree *first*, to make no laws in future without the king's licence, and *secondly*, to accept beforehand a revision of the whole existing body of Church law, by a committee nominated by the king. This was to turn the Church into the mere creature of the king's will. But resistance was hopeless. Convocation had to give way; and the 'submission of the clergy,' as this act is called, may be regarded as the turning-point in the development of the royal supremacy.

Next (still in 1532) Parliament was led to pass the Annates Act, whereby the heavy payments customarily made by newly elected bishops to the Pope were declared illegal, But to give the Pope one last chance, the Act empowered the king to bargain on the subject. His agents in Rome were instructed to represent him as holding back the hostility of his people with the utmost difficulty. Nevertheless the Pope refused to yield.

So in 1533 the breach was made definite. In January Henry married Anne Boleyn, but for some months kept the marriage a secret, so as to give the Pope another chance. Parliament passed the Act of Appeals, forbidding all appeals to Rome; and by Henry's orders his newly appointed archbishop, the timid half-Protestant Cranmer, assumed the papal prerogative of trying and determining the great divorce question, and declared that the marriage of Catherine had been invalid from the first; which implied that the king was still a bachelor, and that the Princess Mary was illegitimate. Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn was publicly announced; the new queen was crowned in Westminster Abbey; and in the autumn gave birth to a daughter, the Princess Elizabeth. Elizabeth was not a year old before the king had executed her mother, after having declared this marriage also invalid, on the ground that Anne had been previously contracted. Thus Elizabeth was illegitimate in the eyes of all orthodox Catholics, and illegitimate also by the edict of her father, and by the parliamentary Act by which her mother was attainted. Such was the unlucky beginning of the glorious princess who was to lead England through some of the most critical and triumphant years of her history.

After the open defiance of the Boleyn marriage the breach with Rome was incurable; and it only remained to make it formal and complete. This was done by means of a very important series of Acts of Parliament, passed in 1534. One of these, besides forbidding payments of any kind to Rome, provided that henceforth bishops of the English Church should be elected by the chapters of their cathedrals, but that the chapters should be bound to elect within twelve days the person whom the king nominated, failing which, the king's nominee should be consecrated; this is still the practice of the English Church. A second Act embodied in statute law the limitation of the powers of Convocation already accepted by the clergy. A third vested the succession to the crown in the heirs of Henry

and Anne Boleyn and, after elaborately setting forth the arguments against the validity of the king's first marriage, required all loyal subjects to take an oath to the whole of this Act, and made it high treason to refuse. It was, of course, an oath which no honest Catholic could take, however willing he might be to recognise the accomplished fact; and thus the Act formed a sword at the necks of all who differed from the king even in thought. Lastly, the most important Act of the series was the first of the long line of Acts of Uniformity; it declared that the king 'justly and rightfully is and ought to be Supreme Head of the Church of England.'

§ 3. *The Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Organisation of Despotism.*

The next six years (1534-1540) form a period of sheer undiluted tyranny, directed on behalf of the king by the hated Cromwell, who bore the title of Vicar-General of the Church. In the first place, a series of monstrous executions or judicial murders aroused the horror of Europe, and established a sort of reign of terror in England. Four Carthusian monks, eminent for their piety, were hanged, drawn and quartered for refusing to take the oath. For the same reason the saintly and scholarly Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and the noblest living Englishman, Sir Thomas More, once the king's familiar friend, went to the scaffold (1535); though both were willing to recognise the new queen. These were the first martyrs of the Roman faith in England, and they died with a quiet and heroic dignity that exalted the cause for which they suffered. Within a few months (1536) Anne Boleyn, having aroused the king's suspicions, was also beheaded; and her marriage, for questioning whose validity such noble blood had been shed, was declared to have been invalid from the beginning. Henry, once more a bachelor, consoled himself by marrying Jane Seymour, the daughter of an old and rapidly rising English family. She was the most happy of Henry's queens, first because she bore him the long-desired son, afterwards Edward VI., about whose legitimacy there could be no question, since Catherine of Aragon had died shortly before; and secondly, because she died before her ruthless spouse had tired of her. As yet, though all connexion with Rome had been broken off, no change whatsoever had been made in the doctrine or

practice of the Church of England. But Cromwell was reputed to have some leanings towards the new doctrines, and the gentle Archbishop Cranmer, though dominated by his formidable master, had reforming sympathies, which were shared by several of the more recently appointed bishops. Men hoped, or feared (according to their attitude), that the repudiation of papal supremacy might now be followed by a doctrinal change. A certain freedom was allowed to Lutheran preachers. In 1536 the king issued a statement of the beliefs which he required his subjects to hold in the *Ten Articles*, in which, while there was no real departure from the fundamental doctrines of the Roman Church, notably Transubstantiation, some concessions were made to the reformers, especially by the abandonment of the doctrine of Purgatory. And in a series of Injunctions to the Clergy, by which the Articles were followed, the clergy were ordered to preach against 'the usurped power of the Bishop of Rome,' to cease praising images and relics, and to place in the choir of every church a Bible in Latin and English for every one to read.

But the main work of these years was the suppression of the monasteries. In 1536, after a very perfunctory inquiry, brutally carried out, an appalling report on the condition of the monasteries was issued. Some part of the hideous charges of vice levied against the monks in this document may have been true, but the method in which it was drawn up deprived it of real authority. Nevertheless Parliament decreed the dissolution of 376 monasteries with an annual income of less than £200 apiece, and the confiscation of all their property to the Crown. This was the last important Act of the Long Parliament of 1529-36, which had been the instrument of such revolutionary changes. It left the greater monasteries still untouched. But during the next three years one after another of them was inveigled or forced into a surrender of their privileges and property. They resisted as much as they dared: the abbots of Colchester and Reading had to be judicially murdered *pour encourager les autres*, before the resistance was beaten down. Finally a new Parliament in 1539 gave the force of law to all earlier surrenders, and to any that might yet be brought about, and vested all surrendered monastic property in the Crown. Under this Act the last monastic institutions in England disappeared.[1]

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 37, where the numbers and distribution of the monasteries are shown.

Many of the monasteries were undoubtedly corrupt and badly conducted. The monastic system had outlived its greatest usefulness. There were good grounds for transferring their resources to purposes which they had once fulfilled, but which were now met by other means; Wolsey had not hesitated to suppress monasteries in order to endow his colleges, and many enlightened churchmen were quite ready to see this policy carried out on a large scale. There were still important functions which the monasteries performed: they administered charity generously, they gave shelter to the homeless; and at this period, when economic change was robbing many of their livelihood, the necessity of some organised system of poor relief was greater than ever. If the wealth of the monasteries had been devoted to well organised schemes for the relief of poverty, the encouragement of education, and the provision of religious teaching, the suppression would have been justified; and there is reason for thinking that Parliament was led to expect that much of the monastic wealth would have been used in this way.

But no such use was made of it; except that four new bishoprics were endowed with monastic lands. Most of the monastic estates, scattered over every part of England, were granted, or sold at low prices, to nobles, courtiers, officials, country-gentlemen, yeomen and men of even humbler birth. About one thousand men participated in the great plunder. They owed their new wealth to the king and to the religious revolution, and therefore were bound to be steady supporters of both. Out of the plunder of the Church sprang a new nobility, far more submissive to the Crown than the older nobility which had been destroyed in the Wars of the Roses. Many of the great houses which have played leading parts in later English history thus for the first time rose into wealth and prominence; and in many cases the splendid country mansions which have been the centres and tokens of their greatness still bear the names of abbeys or priories.

The wholesale and sudden transfer of vast estates to new masters who had no traditional associations with their tenantry quickened and intensified the economic changes that were already taking place. The monasteries had not always been good landlords; but as a rule they had been conservative landlords, slow to make sweeping changes. The new-comers, whose first desire was to make wealth quickly, had no such hesitations; and on a wholesale scale

they began to enclose the monastic lands for sheep-farming. This increased their own riches, and perhaps it increased the total wealth of the country; it undoubtedly stimulated the growth of the woollen industry which was to play an increasing part in the development of English greatness. But it also involved the dispossession or ruin of many cultivators, and added to the number of wandering landless men whose 'vagabondage' puzzled statesmen during the rest of the century. And at the same time all the relief hitherto afforded by the charity of the monasteries came to an end, and distress and discontent were greatly increased. Thus a change which might have led to great national advantage if it had been wisely carried out produced effects that were almost wholly evil, because it was carried out by a tyrant with a single eye to his own power and profit.

It was mainly the discontent caused by the suppression of the lesser monasteries which led, in 1536, to two risings in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, the counties where the monasteries had been most numerous. These were the only revolts with which Henry VIII. was ever troubled; and it is a striking illustration of the loyalty of the nation to its king that the rebels sincerely professed the most devoted affection for him, and prayed only that the king's evil counsellors—they meant Cromwell—should be dismissed. The Lincolnshire rising was easily put down. The Pilgrimage of Grace, as the Yorkshire rebellion was called, was much more formidable; it was joined by many nobles and gentlemen, and most admirably and moderately directed by Robert Aske, a barrister. Indeed, it was only broken up by the promise that a new Parliament should meet, and a free pardon be granted to all who had taken part. Henry's self-esteem found it hard to stomach such a check; and, taking advantage of a new and quite irresponsible outbreak, for which the leaders were not to blame, he wreaked his vengeance by executing all the leaders, and by commanding a terrible punishment of the offending districts. 'You shall in any wise,' he wrote to his agents, 'cause such dreadful execution to be done upon a good number of the inhabitants of every town, village, and hamlet . . . as well by the hanging of them up in trees or by the quartering of them, and the setting of their heads and quarters in every town great or small, as they may be a fearful spectacle to others hereafter that they would practise any like matter.' At any sign of resistance, the born tyrant sees blood.

To keep the disorderly North in good order there was

now set up, as a sort of branch of the Privy Council, a body called the Council of the North, which wielded large executive and judicial powers for a century to come. The device had already been adopted with good results in the case of Wales, where the Council of Wales and the Marches had since 1534 done excellent work, and had prepared the way for the incorporation of that backward land with England. The full union of England and Wales—the first of the long series of unions in the history of the British Commonwealth—belongs to this period. It was carried out by an Act of 1536, and completed in 1543. The special jurisdiction of the Marcher Lords at last disappeared; the English shire organisation was extended to every part of the country; and the Welsh shires and boroughs were given representatives in the English Parliament. But Wales was still backward and apt to be lawless; and therefore the special jurisdiction of the council was retained here, as in the backward and lawless northern counties. As these councils were wholly dependent upon the king's will, this involved a further extension of the royal power. But in this, as in other instances, it cannot be denied that the increase of royal power brought an increase of public order and peace.

§ 4. *The Culmination of Henry VIII.'s Power.*

One more service had yet to be rendered by Thomas Cromwell, the organiser of despotism: in 1539 he was called upon to pack and to manage a new Parliament—the most abject and servile which has ever met since Parliament existed in England. It was this Parliament which completed the destruction of the monasteries. It also accepted from the royal theologian a new and much more drastic demonstration of his orthodoxy in the *Six Articles*, which on all the main doctrinal points in dispute between Catholics and Protestants decided unmistakably on the Catholic side. While Parliament was sitting, a man was hanged in London for eating meat on a Friday, so strict was the Defender of the Faith; and his servile Parliament now endorsed the Six Articles with a ferocious penal statute which made death the penalty for differing, even in opinion, from the king. But the most remarkable achievement of this Parliament was the Act of Proclamations, which gave to all royal proclamations the force of law, and thus resigned into the king's hands the uncontrolled power of legislation. This represents the culminating point of the despotism of Henry VIII.

Now, indeed, the fabric of despotism was completed, and its architect, Cromwell, had done his work. Only one use remained for him; he could die on the scaffold as the scapegoat for the unpopularity which recent events had roused. The immediate occasion of his fall was that he had persuaded the king to take, as his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, a stolid and unprepossessing Netherlander, with the idea that so a link might be forged between England and the Protestant princes of Germany. But a single glance at the 'Flanders Mare,' as he called her, was enough for Henry: the lady was promptly divorced and pensioned off; and Cromwell, loathed by the whole nation, and cast off by the king for whom he had worked so many crimes, had his reward (1540) in the joy with which his execution was hailed on all hands. 'Bluff King Hal' became as popular as ever.

The last seven years of Henry's reign were comparatively quiet, and were not dominated by the personality of any single minister like Wolsey or Cromwell. The king was his own minister, wielding all the despotic authority over Church and State which Cromwell had built up for him. The chief event of the period was a war with France (1543-6), and Scotland (1542-7), in which Henry was once more ranged on the side of Charles V. It was conducted with a good deal of vigour. On the seas the fleet, on which Henry had never grudged money or thought, was steadily successful. On land the useful port of Boulogne was captured. In Scotland the death of James V., leaving a girl-child, Mary Queen of Scots, as his sole heir, seemed to renew the chance of uniting the two kingdoms by marrying a girl queen to a boy Prince of Wales, which had attracted Edward I. nearly three centuries before; and, owing to the progress of the Reformation in Scotland, there were many Scots who might have favoured such an arrangement. But the despatch of an army into Scotland, and the burning of Edinburgh, was not the best way of wooing. Henry's tyrannical ways ruined a possible chance of peaceful union.

At home Henry in his last years was as tyrannical as ever, and as resolutely orthodox. The burning of Anne Askew, a lady of high connexions, for heretical opinions, showed that the king was still mercilessly orthodox. The marriage (1540) and execution (1542) of his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, showed that he was still suffering from the perversity of the wayward sex. The attainder of the first of English nobles, the Duke of Norfolk, and his son, the poet Earl of Surrey, who had indulged in foolish talk

about his nearness to the royal house, showed that the most powerful were not exempt from the terrors of the despot. Surrey lost his head. Norfolk's remained on his shoulders only because the despot died suddenly (Jan. 1547) before his execution could be carried out.

The splendid and gallant prince who had won all hearts at his accession had developed during the second half of his reign into a ruthless, perfidious and hypocritical tyrant. Yet it is not hard to understand why it was that he was able to retain to the end the loyal affection of the mass of his subjects. They did not know all the meanness and ugliness of his acts, which are disclosed to us. Through all the horrors he remained a masterful and kingly figure, steering the ship of State through perilous channels with a firm hand. The great changes which he carried through were, on the whole, not unwelcome to his people; and they laid the blame for what was manifestly wrong upon the ministers who seemed to abuse the royal confidence. Bloodshed was lightly regarded by a generation whose fathers had lived through the Wars of the Roses. Religious intolerance was for that and many later generations a virtue rather than a crime. If Henry was a despot, at least his despotism maintained order; and amid all his cruelties to great and prominent people the ordinary machinery of the law went on unswervingly, meting out an even-handed justice in the disputes of common folk such as had perhaps never been known in England before. The land was prosperous, though it had its social troubles. It was strong to meet all dangers, on land and sea, and respected and feared among the nations. Unlike other lands, it never saw the tide of foreign invasion, or (except in the Pilgrimage of Grace), the worse troubles of civil war. It was guided securely through all the dangers and distresses of the great religious change, which caused so much misery and suffering in other countries. The man who achieved all this was a great man, if a hateful one; and the formidable and sinister personality of Henry VIII., founder of the English navy and organiser of the national Church, must rank high among the builders of English strength.

§ 5. *Edward VI. and Protestantism Triumphant*, 1547-1553.

Edward was nine years old when his father died, and therefore could not wield the vast personal power which his father had wielded. Parliament was too well schooled

to dream of resuming its old authority. The Privy Council was filled with industrious underlings, afraid of responsibility. Inevitably, therefore, the dictatorship to which the country had learned to submit fell to the individual who was able to grasp it. It naturally fell first to the king's uncle, Earl of Hertford and later Duke of Somerset, whom Henry VIII. had named in his will as Protector of the young king.

Somerset was a man of generous instincts, inspired by sincere ideals, and he had a strong leaning towards the Protestant side in the religious controversy. He had a refreshing belief in the value of liberty, and resolved to dispense with the terrific engine of despotism which Henry VIII. and Cromwell had created. Guided by him, the first Parliament of Edward VI. rescinded the Act which gave the force of law to royal proclamations, and thus resumed its legislative powers. It abolished the monstrous extensions of the definition of treason which had been made during the previous reign. It cancelled the ferocious persecuting Act of the Six Articles, and even the ancient statute *de hæretico comburendo* : religious persecution was to cease in England. The immediate result was an inrush of Protestant preachers, foreigners and exiled Englishmen. Many of them came with far fiercer and more definite ideas than their predecessors. For in the meanwhile the 'fighting doctrine' of Protestantism, which tolerated no compromise or palterings with princes, had been worked out by Calvin, in the free city of Geneva, which he had dominated since 1540. Eager and violent religious discussion began to be heard in England, as never before since the time of Wycliffe ; and disorder followed in its train. It did not much affect the stolid mind of England as a whole ; but it largely increased the number of fervid Protestants in London and the south-east, who desired the introduction of sweeping changes. Hitherto their numbers had been negligible.

It was under the Protectorship of Somerset that Archbishop Cranmer first dared to let his real sympathies be plainly seen. The religious policy of the country was in fact at first determined mainly by these two ; they for the first time made the Reformation in England something more than a mere political device. In 1549, after full discussion, the English Church obtained a full order of service in the English language by the first issue of the Book of Common Prayer. This was almost wholly Cranmer's

work; and its exquisite grave beauty forms the real title to greatness of that gentle and weak man. He had given to his countrymen something that they could make a part of themselves, something that rose high above the squabblings over doctrine which surrounded its birth, and that could command the allegiance not merely of men's intellects but of their hearts. The first version of the Book of Common Prayer was imposed upon all English churches by the Act of Uniformity of 1549. It was intended to moderate the storm of religious controversy, and the doctrines implied in it were not violently out of sympathy with the old beliefs. But, taken in conjunction with the freedom allowed to the preachers, it produced a rebellion in Devon and Cornwall, where loyalty to the old faith was still strong.

It was not only in religion that Somerset tried new paths. He felt also much sympathy with the complaints of the peasantry against the enclosure movement, and let his sympathies be openly seen. When, therefore, a revolt broke out in Norfolk, headed by a well-to-do tanner, Robert Kett, whose object was the restriction of enclosures, Somerset was drawn in two directions by his sympathies with the rebels and his sense of the necessity of maintaining order. He let the rising attain formidable dimensions, and it was only by the vigorous action of his chief rival in the council, the Earl of Warwick, that it was finally suppressed. This lost him the sympathy of the new nobility and the country gentry, on whose support the Tudor monarchy mainly rested, and who were chiefly responsible for, and profited by, the enclosures. Thus in his management of domestic affairs Somerset's good intentions had led to unhappy results. In this age of rapid change and unrest a firm hand was still needed; and the hard efficient tyranny of Henry VIII. yielded, in the eyes of most men, better results than the mild slipshod rule of his brother-in-law.

Nor was Somerset's management of foreign affairs any more happy. In Scotland he endeavoured to continue Henry VIII.'s policy, and led an army over the Border to compel the Scots to give their young queen in marriage to the young English king. He won a victory at Pinkie (1547). But force is a poor argument, and the result of the victory was to throw the Scots again into the arms of France, and to give the young Mary as wife to a French prince—an event which was to lead to very dangerous results. Again, he drifted into a war with France (1549). The war was badly conducted, largely because Henry VIII.

had left an almost empty treasury in spite of his plunderings and confiscations; and the chief outcome was the loss of Henry's conquest of Boulogne. At home and abroad inefficiency and confusion seemed to reign; men realised how valuable had been the masterful competence of Henry VIII.

These gathering discontents enabled Somerset's chief rival, the Earl of Warwick (later Duke of Northumberland), to supplant him (1549); and although Somerset was allowed to survive until January 1552, when he was judicially murdered in the manner made familiar under Henry VIII., the real ruler of England during the last four years of Edward's reign was Northumberland.

The new dictator had none of Somerset's generous instincts. His power depended upon the remarkable personal influence which he wielded over the boy king, and upon the purchased support of a party of nobles and officials. To satisfy his own greed, and to keep his supporters in good temper, the treasury was so despoiled that neither fleets nor armies could be kept efficient, and the safety and order of the country were imperilled. For the same purposes, the plunder of Church property continued more flagrantly than ever. In 1547 the very numerous small endowments called 'chantries' had been suppressed; they had commonly been attached to parish churches, and provided maintenance for a priest, whose duty was to pray for the souls of the founder and his family, and often also to keep school for poor children. The proceeds of the chantries were intended to be devoted largely to education, and the grammar schools which bear the name of Edward VI. mainly came from this source. But Northumberland intercepted the greater part of the funds, and used them for his own ends. He also seized and sold many of the lands of bishoprics, and confiscated the jewels and plate of churches. He re-established in a large degree the reign of terror which Somerset had abandoned, and made new treason laws. On the question of enclosures he refused all concessions to the popular complaints, and gave full legal sanction to the enclosures, because he wanted the support of their makers.

On the religious question, knowing that he could expect no backing from the Catholics, he deliberately adopted an extreme Protestant policy, all the more readily because the precocious young king prided himself upon his reforming views. The Prayer Book of 1549, which had been capable of a Catholic interpretation, was revised in an entirely Protestant sense (1552). Cranmer was encouraged

to draw up a statement of belief in Forty-Two Articles which was definitely Protestant in character, especially in its complete rejection of transubstantiation ; and this creed was enforced by a new Act of Uniformity. For his private ends, and without any sincere religious convictions, Northumberland was forcing England into extreme Protestantism. The mystery of the Mass, which had been a part of the life of all men for many centuries, was suddenly abolished in every parish church by a mere edict of government. But though the ultra-Protestant party was loud and vigorous, especially in London, the slow-moving mind of the country was by no means ready for such sweeping changes.

Parliament became ominously restive. Northumberland dared not ask it for money. It even plucked up its courage to throw out a whole group of government bills. Tudor Parliaments were 'subservient' only so long as they believed that the country was being fairly and efficiently governed. But still more marked were the expressions of dissatisfaction throughout the country. Throughout the years of Northumberland's rule there were sporadic risings in almost every county. To keep them in check Northumberland found it necessary to permit some of the greater nobles to raise troops of cavalry at the public expense ; and in every county lords-lieutenant were established to maintain public order. This became a permanent institution, and survives to-day ; though the lords-lieutenant of to-day have only formal and ceremonial duties. Lastly, even in the Privy Council, though Northumberland had carefully purged and packed it, there was disunion and distrust. For the lords of the council realised with fear the deep and dangerous game which the dictator was playing ; a game which, if they backed it, would make them guilty of high treason, while if they opposed it, and it nevertheless succeeded, they would assuredly be exposed to the penalties of high treason.

Universally hated, except by the small group of Protestant extremists, Northumberland knew that his position was only safe so long as he wielded the power of the Crown. But the young king was ailing, and obviously could not live long. If his sister Mary, the Catholic princess, succeeded, Northumberland was doomed. His only hope was in filling the throne with some one whom he controlled. If Mary and Elizabeth were passed over as illegitimate, and if Mary of Scotland (granddaughter of Henry VIII.'s elder sister) were passed over as a foreigner, the next heir

would be the representative of Henry VIII.'s younger sister, who had married the Duke of Suffolk. Her granddaughter was the gentle and cultivated Lady Jane Grey. Northumberland resolved to marry this lady to his son, Guilford Dudley, and to make the young king devise the throne to her by will. It was a daring plan. But in face of the universal reprobation of the country it could never have succeeded. Edward VI. died on July 6, 1553, before Northumberland's plans were quite ripe. By July 21 Queen Mary, daughter of the cruelly misused Catherine of Aragon, had secured the throne, and Northumberland was in the Tower. The four years of his power were like a bad dream, and the nation rejoiced that it was over. But a worse nightmare was about to begin.

§ 6. *Mary and the Catholic Reaction*, 1553-1558.

The new queen was thirty-eight years old. Since her fourteenth year she had lived under the shadow of the cruel wrong that had been done to her proud Spanish mother, with whom she had spent the years when girlhood passed into womanhood. She had been unjustly declared illegitimate. She had been excluded from the natural surroundings of a royal princess, and enveloped in an atmosphere of hostility and intrigue. Her sole consolations had been her passionate belief in her mother's cause, her pride in her near relation to the Emperor and King of Spain, and above all her sense that she, like her mother, had suffered as a martyr for the faith. Now, after many dangers, she had been brought to the throne, as by the very finger of God. She entered upon her new task with a very solemn feeling that it was her mission to restore England to the ancient Church, and that in this task her natural ally was the royal house of Spain, from which her mother had sprung. She was the most sincere and disinterested of all the Tudors; but just because her mind was fixed on a single aim, she lacked the instinctive understanding of national sentiment which was the strength of her father and her sister. Her life had put her out of touch with the moods and needs of the age. Therefore she failed tragically; and she knew that she had failed, though with Tudor courage and obstinacy she pursued her aim to the end.

At first she acted moderately. Northumberland suffered on the scaffold, as he deserved, after a base recantation of his Protestant opinions; but there were no other victims

during the first six months of the reign. The full restoration of Catholic practice could not be carried out until Parliament had rescinded the Protestant legislation of Edward VI.'s reign; and the undoing of Henry VIII.'s breach with Rome had to be still more cautiously approached. Meanwhile Mary had to use the royal supremacy (though she regarded it as sacrilege) to displace Cranmer and other reforming bishops, and to re-establish the Mass. The queen found Parliament very difficult to manage: she held three elections in the first eighteen months of her reign in the hope of getting an amenable house; and although she got her own way she had to go warily. Nothing could show how deeply rooted the parliamentary system was in England more clearly than the fact that even a Tudor sovereign, backed by the might of Spain, dared not dispense with it or override it.

But the main event of Mary's first year was the announcement of the queen's intention to marry her cousin Philip, son and heir of Charles V., to whose dominions in Spain, Italy and the Netherlands Philip succeeded when Charles abdicated in 1555. Though the relations between England and Spain, and still more between England and the Netherlands, had long been friendly, the announcement was received with consternation. For it seemed to promise that England would be absorbed in the vast Spanish monarchy, just as Scotland appeared to have been practically annexed to France by the marriage of her young queen to the French Dauphin; and the prospect outraged the strong national feeling of England. From this moment fear and hatred of Spain began to grow among the English. It went on growing in strength until it culminated in the Armada fight. It changed the direction of English policy, and did more than anything else to make Protestantism a national creed. But Mary's heart was set upon the match. She disregarded the advice of many of her most loyal friends, like Bishop Gardiner and Cardinal Pole. She was not deterred by the manifest dissatisfaction of Parliament. Not even a formidable rebellion, (Jan.-Feb. 1554), organised by Sir Thomas Wyatt among the gentry and yeomanry of Kent, specifically as a protest against the marriage, made her pause; though Wyatt nearly made himself master of London, and threatened the government more seriously than it had ever been threatened during the sixteenth century. The only result of Wyatt's rebellion was that the long-delayed vengeance

against the partners or instruments of Northumberland was put into effect. Among the victims was the gentle, beautiful and cultivated Lady Jane Grey, little over sixteen years old, who met her death with a calm fortitude that made it one of the most affecting scenes in Tudor history. Her death was as great an iniquity as that of Sir Thomas More, and sanctified the cause of Protestantism as much as his had sanctified the cause of Catholicism.

It was in 1554 and 1555 that the religious revolution of Henry VIII. was undone. Parliament was persuaded, not without difficulty, to repeal Henry's anti-papal legislation, and to petition for readmission to the Roman communion. Cardinal Pole, an Englishman of noble family who had been exiled and attainted by Henry for his loyalty to the ancient faith, was relieved of his attainder, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in place of Cranmer, and undertook the direction of the queen's religious policy. The old fierce heresy laws, which Somerset had destroyed, were re-enacted, and the bishops and the government were thus empowered by Parliament to inaugurate a regime of persecution. But on one point Parliament flatly refused to yield. It would not agree to restore the confiscated monastic property; and only that small part of the plunder of the Church which had remained in possession of the Crown was disgorged. The feeling that their lands were endangered made the gentry at any rate very half-hearted in their support of the religious reaction.

Now began a fierce crusade for the extirpation of Protestantism by fire and sword. It began in February 1555, and continued (with significant pauses during the sessions of Parliament) throughout the rest of the reign. Men and women were publicly burnt, singly or in batches, suffering extreme tortures, in most cases with amazing heroism. Even dead heretics were taken from their graves to be burnt. The most notable of the Protestant martyrs were the four chief Protestant bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Hooper. Hooper, the most extreme of the Edwardian bishops, was the first to suffer, in his own episcopal city of Gloucester; Ridley and Latimer followed at Oxford, dying in company. Cranmer, the protagonist of the Anglican Reformation, and the chief author of the Prayer Book, suffered last (1556), delayed until his sentence was pronounced by the Pope. Before his death he recanted seven times, not wholly from cowardice, though naturally he was a timid man, but partly because he profoundly believed in the necessity of submission to the

royal will. His courage returned to him before death; he calmly held in the flames, to be first burnt, the unworthy hand that had signed his recantation; and in the act of death gave a new sanctity to the noble and beautiful Book of Prayer which was his greatest gift to his people. With all his faults, he was a good man, condemned by a hard fate to live in an age too ruthless for his gentle temper.

The fires of Smithfield were meant to destroy Protestantism in England. They had the opposite effect. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church,' and the flames largely redeemed the English Reformation from the rather sordid associations which had hitherto weighed it down. The memory of these martyrdoms was seared into the mind of the English people, and the mark they left has been indelible. They gave birth to the fierce, bitter, unreasoning hatred of Rome and all her works which has ever since been a factor in English life. Yet in comparison with what went on in other countries the Marian persecution was extraordinarily light. Elsewhere the victims of fanaticism, Roman or Protestant, were numbered by thousands. Not more than three hundred lost their lives in England during the three years over which the persecution extended. And these were nearly all in a single district—London and the south-eastern counties. Except a single case at Chester, there was no execution in England north of the Trent, and except one case at Exeter there was none in the south-west. But London and the south-east formed in this age, and for a long time to come, the dominating section of England—the area where wealth was greatest, education most advanced, and population most dense. The main results, therefore, of Mary's reign, were a wider sympathy for the ideas of the reformers than had ever existed before, a burning hatred of Rome, and a growing fear of Spain.

These feelings were already reflecting themselves in Mary's parliaments. They did not yet dream of trying to control or alter the government. But they gave an increasing opposition to its measures. And this opposition was intensified when England found herself drawn at the heels of Spain into a war with France, in which King Philip showed himself entirely negligent of English interests, and while winning victories on his own account allowed the precious possession of Calais to fall to a French attack (1558). This was the crowning humiliation of a bitter and tragical reign. Too late, deserted and deceived by the husband for whom she had sacrificed so much, disappointed

of her hopes of an heir, and recognising that she had failed in her supreme aim, Mary realised that she, an Englishwoman and a Tudor, had brought nothing but misery and humiliation to her country. She died in the year of the fall of Calais, almost at the same moment as her friend and helper, Cardinal Pole; and on that sad November night 'all the churches in London did ring, and men did make bonfires and set tables in the street, and did eat and drink, and make merry for the new queen.'

§ 7. *The Elizabethan Settlement.*

To find a settlement for the religious question was now more difficult than it had ever been, for there were comparatively few men left to whom this was a merely political question, as it had been to the majority in the time of Henry VIII. Passions had been aroused to intensity by the events of the last two reigns; the number of Protestants, and the number of those who regarded the papal supremacy as an article of faith, had both increased, at the expense of that middle body who could be called 'Nationalist Catholics.' Moreover the same thing was happening on the Continent. The great movement known as the Counter-Reformation, which gave a new fervour of conviction to those of the Roman obedience, was actively at work; on the Protestant side the strong and unflinching doctrines of Calvinism were in the ascendent; and the exiles of both parties who had fled abroad during the last two reigns returned far more violent partisans than they had left. It is probable that the Protestants were in the majority in the south and east of England, but the Catholics had certainly the upper hand in the north and west. Yet it was essential for the safety of England that national unity should be maintained, and national unity would be easily destroyed by any vehement religious controversy. The political situation at the opening of Elizabeth's reign was extremely precarious. England, exposed to dangers from France on the one hand and Spain on the other, seemed to be 'like a bone between two dogs.'

The new queen was extraordinarily well fitted to deal with such a situation. Though she was only twenty-five, she had already steered a course through every kind of peril. She was clever, quick-witted, secretive, without scruple as to the means she used, an adept at conveying impressions without committing herself. She prided herself

upon her purely English and Welsh blood; no sovereign has ever ruled England, since the Norman conquest, in whom there was so small a strain of foreign blood; and to keep her England purely English was the beginning and end of her policy, the aim of all the bewildering tacks and veers with which she steered her way through the perils that surrounded her. She had probably no sincere religious opinions; if she kissed with impressive fervour the Bible that was presented to her as she rode through London to her coronation, she kept a crucifix in her private chapel; but she did both things for political reasons. It is probable that she was a natural sceptic, devoid of religious emotion. But this meant that she had little patience with the wranglings of the sects. It meant also that she could have no credence in the incomprehensible mystery of the Mass.

Many expected a complete and sudden reversal of Mary's policy, and were disappointed that it did not take place. But Mary's laws were still *Laws*; there was no interference with Catholic services until Parliament had made them illegal; and not a single bishop, not even the persecuting Bonner of London, was displaced otherwise than by his own voluntary resignation. The religious settlement was left to be made by Parliament, and by a Parliament which was apparently quite freely elected; even the Marian bishops were allowed to take their part freely in the discussion, as members of the House of Lords. There were long debates before a decision was arrived at; there was almost an open breach between the two houses; and bitter complaints were made of the frequent changes proposed by government in the measures which they introduced. In the end two Acts were passed. The first was an Act of Supremacy, which revived the control of the Crown over the Church; but Elizabeth declined to accept the title 'Supreme Head of the Church,' over which so much controversy had raged. She preferred the more colourless title of 'Governor.' The second act was an Act of Uniformity, which restored the authority of the second Prayer Book of Edward VI. But a few skilful changes were made in the book, which had the effect of making it more inoffensive to Romanists, so much so that an eminent Spaniard asserted that it contained not a word inconsistent with Catholic belief.

Elizabeth was as cautious in using her power over the Church as in designing it. She left the actual direction of Church affairs mainly to the bishops, though she watched

them. She did not emphasise the royal supremacy as Henry had done. She avoided as far as possible all downright definitions of doctrine, and her Thirty-nine Articles, the final creed of the Anglican Church, issued in 1563, were as carefully vague, for the most part, as her revised Prayer Book. Her settlement has been described as Catholic, as Lutheran, as Zwinglian and as Calvinist. She rejoiced in this indefiniteness, and made great play with it. It was not for her, she said, to 'open windows into her subjects' hearts,' and so long as they did not openly repudiate the ordinances established by government she did not disturb them. Not a single life was taken on religious grounds during the first seventeen years of her reign; and that is an extraordinary tribute to her government, in an age when, on both sides, fanatical persecution raged.

An obvious compromise, such as that of 1559, could arouse no fervour. But it maintained peace and unity, and enabled England to pass unscathed and triumphant through a great crisis. And as the crisis developed, and as the passionate national feeling of the English passed from success to success, the national religion, which was, to begin with, more national than religious, won for itself a genuine loyalty and fervour of belief. The beautiful forms of prayer that men had used in the days of dread when the Armada was approaching English shores, and when their anxiety was lifted by the news that it had been broken and dissipated, thenceforward commanded a devotion that was no longer half-hearted or forced. The Anglican Reformation was completed.

[Fisher's *England from the Accession of Henry VII. to the death of Henry VIII.* and Pollard's *England from the Death of Henry VIII. to the Death of Elizabeth* (both volumes of the Political History of England) supply the best modern survey of the period. See also Lindsay's *History of the Reformation*, Pollard's *Henry VIII.* and *The Protector Somerset*, Froude's *History of England* (brilliantly written, partial and one-sided, but more vivid than any other book on the period), R. W. Dixon's *History of the Church of England*, Gairdner's *Lollardy and the Reformation*, Merriman's *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, Gasquet's *Eve of the Reformation*, *Henry VIII. and the Monasteries*, and *Edward VI. and the Prayer-book*, Pollard's *Factors in Modern History*, Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, Meredith's *Economic History of England*.]

CHAPTER VI

THE REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND

(A.D. 1528-1561)

James V., 1513: Mary, 1542.

§ 1. *Scotland in the Sixteenth Century.*

In all the countries which were affected by it the Reformation brought great changes. But in none did it exercise a more powerful influence than in Scotland. It changed the course of Scottish history. It brought to a close the long conflict between Scotland and England. It transformed the character of the Scottish people. And for one brief period it made the domestic concerns of this small and poor country a matter of the most vital importance for all the great States of Europe. If the Scottish Reformation had not achieved its triumph in the year 1560, it is probable that the whole history of the islands and of Europe would have been widely different.

Scotland in the early sixteenth century was, what it had been for hundreds of years, a land torn asunder by the incessant strife of feudal nobles, border raiding chieftains and Highland clans. Its history was made up of wild stories of fierce family vendettas and ruthless private war. Even the ablest of its kings had never succeeded in maintaining peace or firm government. Most of them had died violent deaths, while still young, leaving infant heirs to be wrangled over by the magnates. The far too numerous nobles, confident in the loyalty of their retainers, were often able to defy the royal justice. The nominal Parliament of Scotland was in reality little more than an assembly of nobles: though the burghs sent representatives, they had little or no influence, and the middle-class of landed gentry had long ceased to take part in these meetings.

Although the country was by no means so wretched as these facts would suggest, it was extremely poor, and its trade and industry were negligible. One thing only promised well for the future: the Scots were already a well educated people—perhaps more generally educated than

any other people in Europe. Their zeal for learning was shown by the large number of young Scots who wandered abroad to Paris and elsewhere, in search of learning—like the famous scholar, George Buchanan (1506-1582), who had the reputation of being the greatest Latinist of his age. It was shown also by the fact that Scotland already possessed three universities, all founded during the fifteenth century. They were poor and ill-endowed, and ranked far behind great seats of learning like Paris and Oxford. But there were three of them—three for a population of much less than a million.

In the divided and feud-torn condition of this small, barren land, one thing alone maintained a real unity: the passionate devotion of the Scots to the national independence which they had spent so much blood to defend during three centuries of almost incessant war with England, and of loyal friendship with France. This hostility to England, and this friendship with France, were the strongest things in the Scottish tradition. Yet they had brought many ills upon the land; and perhaps the greatest had been the appalling disaster of Flodden Field (1513), which was due mainly to the chivalrous desire of James IV. to go to the aid of France when she was attacked by England.

During the reign of James V. (1513-1542), which covered the greater part of the reign of his uncle, Henry VIII., the traditional features of Scottish history still continued. The years of James' minority were filled with the warfare of his turbulent nobles; the years of his active reign were filled with a desperate struggle to reduce them to obedience. And in spite of the fact that his mother was the sister of the English king, James V. steadfastly pursued the traditional Scottish policy of friendship with France and hostility to England. Both his first and his second wives were French princesses—the second being Mary of Guise, a member of a family that was to play a prominent part in French and European history. And, as so often before, the declaration of war between England and France was always the signal for war between England and Scotland. When Henry VIII. attacked France in 1523 an English army ravaged the Scottish Lowlands, and over a large area left (according to Wolsey's report) 'neither house, fortress, village, tree, cattle, corn, or other succour for man.' When in 1542 England once more went to war, an English army once more ravaged the eastern borders of Scotland, and a Scottish host was organised to invade the western borders

of England. But the Scots met such a disastrous and humiliating defeat at Solway Moss that the sheer shame and vexation of it killed the unhappy young king—not yet thirty-one years old. Very manifestly this traditional policy was bringing nothing but evil to Scotland.

During this reign, indeed, there began to grow up in Scotland, for the first time, a considerable party favourable to an alliance with England. It drew its strength partly from the rebellious nobles who resented James V.'s attempts to subdue them, but there were also many Scots who honestly felt that this ceaseless enmity was ruinous and ought to be ended: and if Henry VIII. had been less high-handed, less untrustworthy, and more conciliatory in his relations with his nephew, the national friendship of the sister nations might have been sealed in these years. But James V. always felt that his uncle was intriguing against him with his nobles. And as he had alienated most of these nobles, he was driven back upon the support of the Church. His chief adviser was the shrewd, able, immoral Archbishop Beton. But in the eyes of Beton, as of all churchmen, the heretic Henry was an enemy to be resisted to the last; all the more because heresy was beginning to get a dangerous foothold in Scotland. Thus the unhappy James V. was driven by his alliance with the Church into hostility both to England and to Protestantism. And thus also the Protestant cause was almost from the first linked, in the eyes of most Scotsmen, with the policy of friendship towards England. It was the development of the Reformation which was to bring the two nations, after so many centuries of strife, into a partnership which was to be indissoluble.

There was no country more ready than Scotland for religious revolution, because there was no country in which the Church was in a more unhealthy condition. It owned about half of the little kingdom's wealth. But its bishops were mostly members of noble houses, as violent and unruly as their friends, in whose feuds they readily joined. Its priests and monks and friars were notoriously ignorant and corrupt; and the Scottish literature of the period—which was much more lively and vigorous than the contemporary literature of England—was full of searching satire against them. Lollardy, coming from England, had found a ready welcome a century earlier, and had never died out: it was strongest in the Western Lowlands, the district from which Knox later drew his steadiest support, and which later

still became the stronghold of the Covenanters. Now preachers of Lutheranism and Lutheran books were beginning to appear in the country. In 1525 the Scottish Parliament found it necessary to pass an Act against the heretical literature which was being freely imported. In 1528—the year before the meeting of the Reformation Parliament in England—the first Scottish Protestant martyr, Patrick Hamilton, was burnt at the stake; and Knox dated from this event the beginning of the Scottish Reformation. But this did not stop the dissemination of the new ideas; there were not many burnings, but that was perhaps mainly because the preachers were protected by powerful nobles. Certainly the yeast was working in Scotland during the years when Henry VIII. was bringing about the severance of the English Church from Rome. And naturally those who sympathised with the new ideas tended also to favour the idea of making friends with England.

§ 2. *Scotland, England and France.*

When James V. died his crown passed to an infant daughter, born only a few days before his death—Mary Queen of Scots, who thus began her tragic career under the most tragic auspices. This meant that unhappy Scotland was once more sentenced to all the miseries of a long minority, with its accompaniment of unending strife between factions of nobles. But in some ways the strife was now more embittered than ever. There was the usual unresting feud between the two great houses whose strife had long torn Scotland asunder—the Hamiltons, led by the Earl of Arran, and the Douglases, led by the Earl of Angus; and with this were mixed up many other family feuds. But there was also the strife between the French party and the English party, and the intensifying conflict between the Protestant party and the Church party.

To Henry VIII. the succession of an infant princess seemed a wonderful opportunity. He conceived the plan of marrying Mary to his son Edward. And so strong was the growing feeling of the disastrous results of Anglo-Scottish hostility that the Regent Arran, who had Protestant leanings, was persuaded to agree to a treaty whereby the young queen was to marry the Prince of Wales as soon as she reached her tenth year. But Scotland was not yet ready for so complete a reversal of her traditional policy; patriotic Scots felt that after such a marriage Scotland

would become no better than a province of England. The churchmen especially regarded with alarm the prospect of an extension of the influence of English heresy. Cardinal Beton took the lead of the French party, and the Regent Arran, a very weak personage, was persuaded to throw over the English treaty, and practically to put himself in Beton's hands. For the next four years (1542-6), though Arran continued to be Regent, Beton was the real ruler of Scotland, and the national leader in a desperate resistance against England.

If Henry had shown patience and forbearance he would have strengthened the hands of the English party, and even if the marriage fell through he might have made a lasting friendship between the two nations. But his tyrannical nature would not brook resistance. He resolved to teach the Scots a lesson. He resorted to the argument of brute force, which is always the worst of arguments with a high-spirited people; and during the remainder of his reign his armies inflicted upon Scotland worse miseries, perhaps, than she had ever endured. In 1544 an English fleet brought an English army to Leith, and Edinburgh was given to the flames. In 1545, though the Scots obtained a success at Ancrum, a new English invasion wrought still more brutal havoc. Melrose and other abbeys were destroyed; five market towns and 243 villages were burnt; and the harvests of whole counties were ruined. This was Henry's mode of showing that friendship between England and Scotland was desirable. As might have been expected, it only had the effect of closing up the ranks of the Scots, and practically destroying the party which favoured friendship with England.

After Henry VIII.'s death the Protector Somerset (who had led the expeditions of 1544 and 1545) still persisted in pursuing the policy of force; and he seemed now to have a better chance of success, because in 1546 Cardinal Beton, the leader of the Scottish national resistance, had been murdered. Somerset led a great army into Scotland, in order to compel the Scots to hand over their young queen as a bride for Edward VI., and won a crushing victory at Pinkie (1547). But this method of wooing only strengthened the determination of the Scots not to yield. It drove them to seek the protection of France, as the only means of saving the independence of Scotland. In 1548 a French army of occupation arrived. But the French king demanded a price for his protection; and a treaty was

signed whereby the little queen was to be sent to France for safety, there to be married to the heir to the French crown. Some of the Scottish nobles were aware of the danger to Scottish independence threatened by this arrangement. But there seemed to be no alternative, and the Estates accepted the treaty 'with one voice.' When the beautiful little six-year-old queen arrived in France in August 1548, the French king exclaimed: 'Now France and Scotland are one State.' And so it appeared to be. For the next twelve years Scotland was practically a province of France. Her young queen, daughter of a French mother, was to spend the most impressionable years of her life amid the intrigues of the licentious French court, married to a sickly prince whom she could not but despise, and entirely out of touch with the events that were transforming the life and character of her own country. That is the second act in the tragedy of Mary.

§ 3. *John Knox and the Religious Revolution.*

Meanwhile, however, though the tyrannical policy of Henry VIII. had ruined for the time the chance of friendship between the two countries, and had made the Protestant cause appear unpatriotic in Scotland, Protestantism was still growing in strength. During the years when Henry was ravaging the country, a great preacher, George Wishart, a fervid, learned, eloquent man, who had been driven from the country in 1538, and had now returned after visiting the centres of Protestantism on the Continent, was daring the terrors of the flames, and preaching the new doctrine under the protection of some of the nobles. In 1546 he came to Haddington. Here one of his hearers was an earnest and brave priest, some forty years old, called John Knox;[1] a man of such resolute and unbending courage that, once he was converted, no terrors would dissuade him. But Haddington was in Cardinal Beton's diocese; and by his orders Wishart was seized and burnt in front of the Cardinal's own castle at St. Andrews. Three months later a group of desperate men, brought together by a mixture of religious and political motives with personal hatred, broke into the castle, murdered the Cardinal, and hung his dead body over the castle wall before the eyes of the citizens. Then they prepared themselves for resistance. They were besieged by the Regent, and as their act was generally con-

[1] There is a short life of John Knox by F. MacCunn.

demned they had no hope of relief. But they held out for more than a year. During that period the castle of St. Andrews became a place of refuge for all sorts of fugitives; and among others John Knox, who had been hunted from place to place as a heretic, came to join them, and preached sermons to them that brought them to tears. The castle was not captured until a French fleet with heavy guns was brought against it. Most of its captured inhabitants were carried off to France, and sentenced to labour as chained slaves in the French galleys. Among these galley-slaves was John Knox. He remained chained to the oar for nineteen months. Then he escaped and took refuge in England, where he became one of the most strenuous of the reforming preachers under Edward VI., and was offered and refused a bishopric. Before long he had again to flee, in order to escape from the persecution of Queen Mary. He betook himself to Geneva, where he learnt from the great Calvin the stern system of theology which he was to introduce into Scotland. Such was the training of the grim, fearless, powerful spirit who was to play a chief part in remoulding the character of the Scottish people, and in bringing about the partnership of the sister nations.

While Knox was labouring at the oar or preaching in England, Scotland was being turned into a province of France. French armies cleared the soil of English invaders; but they also made themselves its real masters. And the result of the French ascendency was that in 1554 the French queen-mother, Mary of Guise, became Regent in place of Arran, who was compensated by the grant of a French duchy. Mary of Guise was an exceedingly able woman; and her policy was to turn Scotland into an appanage of France. The most important offices of State were held by Frenchmen. All the chief fortresses, except Edinburgh Castle, were garrisoned by French troops. This was an invasion of Scottish independence more grave than had ever been known since the time of Edward I. In a very short time the dread of France had become as strong among the Scots as the dread of England had ever been. Opposition began to organise itself. And as Mary of Guise was a strict Catholic, in close alliance with the Church, the opposition was naturally inclined to take the Protestant side. Protestantism, which had seemed unpatriotic when Henry VIII. was ravaging the Lowlands, now became the patriot creed, and this made its progress far easier. But

unhappily there was not now much hope of aid from England, where the persecution of Mary Tudor was in full blast. To the exiled Knox, who had dreamed of seeing England and Scotland linked by a common loyalty to the new faith, the outlook must have seemed dark indeed; and as he brooded on the evil that was being wrought by Mary of Guise in Scotland, and by Mary Tudor in England, he became convinced that the rule of women had much to do with it. He issued the *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment* (government) *of Women*—a violent diatribe which did not make him beloved by Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, with whom he had to work later.

In 1555 John Knox returned, and, during a visit of ten months, not only preached the new faith with extraordinary vigour and success, but did a great deal to organise the opposition to the Regent as at once a Protestant and a Nationalist party. The Regent did not dare to attack him, because she was aware of her growing unpopularity, and because he had the support of a powerful and growing group of nobles. Chief among these was the Lord James Stewart, afterwards Earl of Moray, who was an illegitimate elder brother of the young queen. A steadfast, loyal and honourable young man, he became a convinced Protestant, and was to be the chief support of the Protestant cause. In 1557 a group of these Protestant nobles, henceforward known as the Lords of the Congregation, bound themselves in a solemn covenant never to rest till they had established the reformed religion as the national religion of Scotland. This group became the centre round which gathered all the enthusiasts for Protestantism, and all the patriots who resented French domination. The national feeling more and more supported them, and more and more became identified with the Protestant cause. The Regent dared not attempt to suppress the movement. She did indeed burn one heretic in 1558, but the outcry was so great that she could not venture to go further, and the Protestant preachers became bolder than ever, teaching publicly and openly in Edinburgh and Dundee and other centres.

§ 4. *The Years of Crisis and the Anglo-Scottish Alliance.*

Such was the situation when, in November 1558, Mary Tudor died, and her successor re-established Protestantism in England. This made England the natural ally of the Scottish nationalist and Protestant party. The freedom

of Scotland seemed to depend upon the triumph of Protestantism in England. Not only that, but the safety of England seemed to depend upon the triumph of the Protestant party in Scotland. For Mary Queen of Scots, great-granddaughter of Henry VII., was now, in the eyes of all good Catholics, the legitimate Queen of England; and France saw the dazzling prospect of obtaining supremacy over the whole of Britain. If England were to be invaded from Scotland on the north and from France on the south, and if the invaders were helped by a rising of the numerous English Catholics, it seemed certain that Elizabeth's throne would fall. Then France, Scotland and England would be united under a single crown. And then, also, heresy would be crushed out in the islands. The only protection which Elizabeth seemed to have a right to hope for was that of Spain, whose king had no desire to see France so greatly aggrandised. But Philip of Spain was torn asunder between his political interests and his desire to see the triumph of Catholicism. It was certain that he would not help France to conquer England. But he might stand aloof. It was an alarming feature of the situation that, in 1559, he made peace with France at Cateau-Cambrésis, and there was a general belief that the two great Catholic sovereigns had agreed to join in crushing out heresy once and for all. And if England and Scotland were subdued, where else in Europe was there any Protestant power capable of resisting the forces of Catholicism?

Thus everything seemed to depend upon the success of the nationalist and Protestant opposition in Scotland. If it could be enabled to win the day, Scotland would be freed from French control, England would be saved from the peril of a French conquest without the necessity of throwing herself upon the support of Spain, and Protestantism would be saved from the danger of extinction, not only in these two countries but throughout Europe. So the eyes of the whole world were turned upon Scotland.

In 1559 the great issue at last came to the test. The Protestant revolt broke into flame over Scotland. The exiled apostle, John Knox, returned to assume the lead (May 1559). His fiery and passionate sermons carried his hearers off their feet, and led, in one town after another, to outbreaks of destructive violence. Mary of Guise saw that she must make a stand before her authority had been completely broken down. She ordered all the preachers to appear before her. The result was that thousands of the

Protestant gentry began to gather in bands for their defence, while the Lords of the Congregation took the lead in a national revolt. And the real leader and inspirer of all was the stern and fearless preacher. English aid was necessary: Knox was the chosen ambassador first sent to persuade Elizabeth to give it. But Elizabeth hesitated —she always hated to commit herself to a definite line of action; and for the best part of a year the Scottish Protestants had to fight their own battle, against the disciplined forces of France. Nevertheless, by the end of 1559, they had succeeded in penning the main force of the Regent into Leith, which they were besieging. But they were only holding their own with difficulty, and were by no means masters of the rest of the country. If a French fleet, with reinforcements and money and supplies, should succeed in getting to Leith, the Regent and the cause of French and Catholic dominance might yet triumph. On January 23, 1560, a fleet of strange vessels appeared in the Firth of Forth. But it was not the expected French fleet. It was an English fleet, sent to cut off the French. Elizabeth had at last made up her mind; and the English fleet had decided this momentous issue, as it was in the future to decide so many more. Scotland owes her freedom and her religion in a large degree to the English navy.

Meanwhile the subtlest of all the Scots, Maitland of Lethington, had concluded with England the treaty which Knox had failed to achieve. An English army advanced to the aid of the Scots, and joined in the siege of Leith, which they found a slow and difficult business. But while they lay before the beleaguered town the Regent Mary of Guise died, and with the death of this brave and able woman the heart went out of the defence. A month later the siege was ended, under the terms of a treaty signed between England, France and the Scottish leaders. Mary Queen of Scots was to cease to use the arms of England. And so long as the queen should remain in France the government was to be in the hands of a commission of twelve Scottish nobles. The treaty of Edinburgh (1560) marks an epoch in the history of the island peoples. For the first time England and Scotland had co-operated in the common interest. The long story of their wars was at an end. Never again were England and Scotland to be arrayed against one another as hostile nations. The English army marched back peacefully through a rejoicing countryside,

followed, as no English army ever had been before, by the gratitude of all Scottish patriots.

§ 5. *The Religious Settlement in Scotland.*

It was now possible for the Scottish leaders to carry out, fully and formally, the religious revolution. At a meeting of the Estates (1560), a Confession of Faith drawn up by Knox and other ministers was formally adopted, the papal jurisdiction was abolished, and the celebration of the Mass forbidden. Henceforth Calvinistic Protestantism was the national creed of Scotland. It is noteworthy that this decision was not accompanied by persecution. There were no burnings of Catholics. The bishops and abbots of the old church were for the most part left in possession of their lands. In spite of the law, the old faith continued to be observed in parts of the country—in some sections of the Highlands it has retained its unchallenged ascendency to this day. But to complete the settlement, it was necessary not merely to define the creed but to fix the organisation of the new Church. For this purpose John Knox drew up a 'Book of Discipline,' which forms probably the greatest of his achievements. It dealt not merely with the organisation of a Church, but with the life of the whole nation. It suggested a very enlightened scheme of national education, far in advance of anything then existing in the world, and a system of poor relief. It did not arrange for the full Presbyterian system of Church government as it was later developed; that was mainly the work of Andrew Melville in the next generation. But it provided that the minister of each parish should be elected by his people, and that in the government of his church he should be assisted by a body of elected lay elders, the kirk session; it was to be the business of the kirk session to supervise the morals and the family life of the community. At the head of the Church system was to be a General Assembly, including elders as well as ministers, a body which would obviously be far more representative of the whole nation than anything that Scotland had hitherto known. Thus it was not merely a system of Church government which Knox contemplated, but a complete reorganisation of the national life. The Scots were to be a nation of educated men, guided by a trained ministry, and controlling their own spiritual affairs.

'The Book of Discipline' was not adopted by the Estates,

mainly because it could not be carried out unless the wealth of the old Church was used for the organisation of the new; and the Scottish nobles had no intention of allowing it to be so employed. Most of this wealth was in fact quietly annexed by the nobles during the following generation, and thus some of the most enlightened schemes of Knox could not be carried out: only a bare pittance was left for the maintenance of the clergy. Nevertheless the main features of Knox's scheme were brought into operation, and the system was finally worked out in Andrew Melville's 'Second Book of Discipline,' which was adopted in 1581, and received formal parliamentary sanction in 1592. It was this system which has moulded the mind of modern Scotland.

One main reason for the delay in completing the new system was that the young queen returned to Scotland in the summer of 1561. Her weakling husband had died; she had had to descend from the French throne; her mother's family, the Guises, had for the time being lost their influence in France. So the proud, beautiful, passionate girl returned to the rugged land which she had scarcely known, just at the moment when it had adopted a great change, which she could neither understand nor sympathise with. Fresh from the graces of the French court and the glowing hopes of empire, she came to the gloomy capital of a barren land, to be bullied by the rude Scottish nobles and preached at by the grim Reformer, who feared no one, had no patience with court etiquette, and had not changed his opinion about the 'monstrous regiment of women.' The thrilling and tragic story of the following years concerns English and European quite as much as Scottish history, and will be touched on in the next chapter.

But Mary's subtle and daring manœuvres postponed the settlement of the Church. Even when she was safely locked up as Elizabeth's prisoner in England (1568), the legacy of party strife which she had left kept many questions open; and though the reforming party preserved the ascendency, they were never able to get a definite settlement of the questions of Church government and Church finance. There were some among the noble politicians who had no love for the democratic system of Presbyterianism; they would have preferred an episcopal system, and they could use the argument that an episcopal system would ease relations with England. It was not until Mary's son, King James VI. (afterwards James I. of England), had come of age, that a settlement became possible. Even then it was

never frankly accepted. The king disliked the Presbyterian system. He disliked it the more the older he grew. He did not relish the power which it gave to the people. He detested the claim to complete independence of secular control which the ministers of the Kirk boldly put forward. He acutely resented being told, as Andrew Melville did not hesitate to tell him, that in spiritual matters he had no more power than any of his subjects, but was only 'God's silly (simple) vassal.' He struggled untiringly to introduce episcopacy into Scotland, both before and after he succeeded to the English throne. But though, by bullying and corruption, he achieved some temporary success, he was never able to shake the loyalty of the Scots to the system Knox had given them.

For Knox, through his Kirk Sessions and General Assemblies, and the Presbyteries and Synods that grew up later, had called the Scottish people into consultation, had given them the right to decide about the questions that interested them most deeply; the townsman, the farmer, the country gentleman, had learned to value the right of taking a share in great decisions. They were not going to yield it up. All the prickly obstinacy which Scotsmen had for centuries shown in the defence of their national independence, they were now to show in defence of their free system of Church government. Moreover, by the long discussion on theological points, they had been turned into a keen-witted and argumentative people, not to be easily deceived. Henceforward, 'Scotland' means no longer only a group of turbulent nobles: the nobles fall more and more into the background. It means the Scottish nation, a democratic and educated nation, poor, proud, quarrelsome, obstinate, intelligent, and deeply concerned about profound questions. That is the nation which John Knox had shaped.

[Hume Brown's or Andrew Lang's *History of Scotland*; Lindsay's *History of the Reformation*; Hume Brown's *Life of John Knox*; Lang's *Knox and the Reformation*; Pollard's *Factors in Modern History*. There is a masterly chapter on the Reformation in Scotland by F. W. Maitland in the Cambridge Modern History. See also Rait's *Relations between England and Scotland*.]

CHAPTER VII

ELIZABETH, MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS, AND PHILIP II.

(A.D. 1561-1587)

§ 1. *The Counter-Reformation and the Political Situation in Europe in* 1559.

UNTIL the middle of the sixteenth century the Reformation had advanced in Europe with very little check. But then the leaders of the ancient Church began to realise the dangers of the situation, to set their house in order, and to collect their resources for a struggle against the religious revolution. This movement is known as the Counter-Reformation. It led to a series of desperate and confused wars which lasted for a century. All the conspiracies, rebellions and intrigues which filled the next half century in England, Scotland and Ireland were simply parts of this great conflict. So were the English struggle against Spain, which culminated in the Spanish Armada; and the desperate revolt of the Dutch under William the Silent, which led to the creation of a new free nation; and the confused and bloody wars of religion in France. All these movements were closely intertwined; and the fortunes of the islands in one of the most critical periods of their history cannot be understood without some comprehension of the course and nature of this vast conflict as a whole.

Four main aspects of the Counter-Reformation should be noted. In the first place there was a clear definition of Roman Catholic dogma, of such a kind as to render a reconciliation with the Protestants impossible, and a systematic, and on the whole successful, attempt to remove those corruptions in the Church which had chiefly provoked the Protestant revolt, and which all good Catholics recognised and deplored. This was mainly the work of the Council of Trent, whose sittings were spread, at long intervals, over the quarter of a century from 1542 to 1566: the main work was done in the sessions of 1546, 1562, and 1566. Originally intended to restore the unity of Christendom, the Council was attended only by orthodox Roman Catholics; and its

result was to make the cleavage between the two religions definite and irrevocable, and to give to the Catholic party a clear idea of these differences and a solid unity of aim. In the second place, the further spread of heresy in Catholic countries was checked by the work of the Papal Inquisition, which chiefly affected Italy but also influenced other countries. The Spanish Inquisition, which was quite distinct, and was under the control of the Spanish Crown, did the same work with far greater ferocity for Spain and the Spanish dominions. In all the Catholic countries fierce persecution was raging during the second half of the century, and the Protestant countries soon began to follow suit. In the third place, the foundation of the remarkable Order of Jesuits by the Spaniard Ignatius Loyola placed at the disposal of the Roman Church a very powerful instrument. Established in 1539, the Company of Jesus consisted of a body of men vowed to absolute obedience, and devoted to the forwarding of the Catholic cause by every possible means. Their numbers grew very rapidly, and they spread into all countries. By means of their admirable system of education they obtained a great influence over the young even in Protestant countries. As the father confessors of ruling princes they could influence the course of politics to the advantage of the Church. As missionaries of the faith they showed often incredible heroism in India and in China and among the savages of the New World; and their emissaries never hesitated to dare the stake and the block in Protestant lands in order to confirm the faith of the Catholic remnant and to win new converts. Lastly, the ruling princes who remained loyal to the old faith were stimulated to use their power for its triumph, and every attempt was made to combine them in a great crusade against heresy.

When in 1559 the two greatest monarchs of Europe, Henry II. of France and Philip II. of Spain,[1] ended the long Franco-Spanish wars in the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, it looked as if the triumph of Catholicism were at hand. For there was no power in Europe that could resist these two if they were united. Both were strong Catholics. Both were engaged, in 1559, in rooting out heresy in their own dominions by fire and sword, in the most pitiless persecutions that Europe had yet seen. On the other hand the Protestants were both weak and divided. The military

[1] There is a short life of Philip II., by M. A. S. Hume, in the Foreign Statesmen Series.

strength of the numerous German princes counted for little; moreover they were divided by the conflict between Lutheranism and Calvinism, and the Lutheran princes, who were the majority, thought they were quite safe, and were unwilling to engage in dangerous adventures. Sweden and Denmark also stood aloof from the struggle. England was in 1559 the only considerable power in which Protestantism was officially established; but the brand-new Elizabethan settlement was as yet in a precarious position, and a majority of the population were still Catholic. In Scotland the Protestants were a band of rebels in arms, the government was in Catholic hands, and the queen was herself a Catholic. In Ireland anarchy prevailed, but the mass of the population was still Catholic, and could be made a thorn in the side of England. In the Netherlands there were rumblings of discontent, but the Inquisition was busily engaged in burning heretics in droves, under the shelter of the might of Spain. The prospects of a complete Catholic victory seemed to be very bright. These were the circumstances in which Elizabeth's reign commenced. It is not surprising that amid such perils she walked with very gingerly steps, and hesitated to commit herself to any definite line of action.

But there were two safeguards against these perils. The first was the rivalry of France and Spain. Both hoped to obtain the mastery in Britain, and neither was willing to give a free hand to the other. France seemed to have the best chance in 1559, because she could hope to control Scotland through her queen, and to conquer England, with the aid of the English Catholics, on the ground of Mary's claim to the English crown. This prospect made Philip II. extremely nervous; rather than see such an increase of French power, he preferred to give his protection to Elizabeth, who encouraged him by pretending that she might yet marry a Catholic husband, or go back to the Catholic faith. Counting on this jealousy of France and Spain, it was possible for Elizabeth and the Scottish Protestant leaders to achieve the victory of 1560—to snatch the bone of Scotland from between the jaws of the two quarrelling mastiffs. For the moment—but only for the moment—the independence of both countries was safeguarded by this event.

The second favourable factor in the situation was the fact that both France and Spain were hampered by troubles of their own. In France, since the death of Henry II. (1559),

× The treaty of Edinburgh
(see page 288)

the court was torn asunder by rival factions, the Guises (Mary Stewart's uncles) and the Bourbons; while the Protestant party, though only a small minority in the country, was very influential, because it included the Bourbons and many great nobles, and was powerful in many of the great trading towns. Civil war on political and religious grounds was already imminent in 1560; and although Elizabeth did not like rebels, she kept in touch with the French Protestant leaders, and when the wars of religion actually began in 1562 she sent an English force to their aid. She did not care whether they won or not; it was enough that France should be kept occupied. She was a most untrustworthy ally. But the French Huguenots were very useful to her. They fought eight civil wars in France during the next forty years, and thus enormously reduced the French danger.

The troubles of Spain were not so serious as those of France. But they were serious enough to make the cautious and slow-moving Philip II. unwilling to launch upon such a difficult enterprise as the conquest of England, and ready to let himself be deceived by Elizabeth's tricks and lies. His main troubles were twofold. On the one hand he had to deal with the Turkish naval power in the Mediterranean. On the other hand he was perplexed by the growing unrest in the Netherlands, where the cruelty of his religious persecution and the generally tyrannical methods of his government were producing more and more violent opposition. There was, indeed, no open revolt in arms until the Duke of Alva was sent in 1567 to drown the discontents of these heretics and agitators in blood; and when the revolt did come, it was ruthlessly and terribly crushed—for the time being. But some of the Dutch rebels, the 'Beggars of the Sea,' escaped and took to piracy on the Narrow Seas. And they were joined by English and French pirates, who continually preyed upon Spanish commerce, using English harbours, to a large extent, as their bases. Elizabeth protested that she was not responsible for, and could not prevent, these activities: the one thing certain is that she did not try, and that she even gave underhand encouragement to more distant piratical adventures at the cost of Spanish commerce, of which we shall see something in the next chapter. Philip, of course, was not altogether deceived by these assurances. But they made him realise (as Elizabeth meant that they should) how completely the communications between Spain and the Netherlands were at the mercy

of England. For the sea route was the only line of connexion. He saw that a war with England would make the complete subjugation of the Netherlands almost impossible. And therefore, even after the danger of a French conquest of England had disappeared, he kept up the forms of friendship: England's turn was not to come until the Netherlands were finally settled. Thus the Netherlands saved England and Scotland, and England saved the Netherlands.

In these circumstances, so long as nothing too violent was done and the forms of friendship with Spain were maintained, Elizabeth might feel fairly secure; and the two British nations were left with a precarious freedom to work out their own destinies. But the working out of events in England and Scotland was manifestly of the most vital importance for the rest of Europe. In both countries the trend of events had identified the cause of Protestantism with the cause of national freedom. And if these causes were defeated—as it was still possible that they might be, even without foreign intervention—then the same causes in the Netherlands, and also elsewhere in Europe, would almost certainly be ruined. If Mary of Scotland could, with the aid of the English Catholics, win the throne of England, not only would there be a religious reaction in both of the British lands, but their weight would be thrown on the Catholic side in the great conflict. And that would be decisive.

Thus issues of the most far-reaching importance turned upon the dramatic rivalry of two young marriageable queens, two cousins, ruling over two sister-nations. Seldom has a purely personal drama had so close a bearing upon world-events.

§ 2. *Elizabeth and Mary*, 1561-1571.

The two cousins were very markedly contrasted. Elizabeth,[1] the virgin queen, was in some ways a man in a woman's body. Though she enjoyed dress and flirting and the grossest flattery, it is doubtful if she ever felt or inspired a deep, personal affection. These things were to her merely relaxation; her heart was in politics, and she had the cool head and masterful will of all the Tudors. She had also their power of judging men and winning their respect and loyalty. She was most faithfully served by a group of

[1] There are short lives of Elizabeth, by E. S. Beesly (in the Twelve English Statesmen Series), and by the late Bishop Creighton.

very able and industrious ministers, of whom William Cecil (Lord Burghley) and Francis Walsingham were the best. Yet she loved to play off lesser men such as Leicester against even these trusted councillors: she would let no man feel that he was all-powerful. Her greatest defects were an incurable preference for deceitful methods, and an incurable unwillingness to come to an irrevocable decision: she loved to feel that she had several alternative courses open to her, and Cecil and Walsingham, both of whom desired a definitely Protestant policy, were often exasperated and alarmed by her apparent vacillations. But she knew what she was doing, and her decisions, if generally made at the eleventh hour, were always made before the twelfth. In the very dangerous condition of European politics this habit of hers had its advantages. No one was sure what line she would follow. Her hesitations were in nowise due to lack of courage: in a crisis no one could be cooler. Nor were they due to uncertainty as to her main aim: she meant to keep her England English. That was the ruling passion of her life, with which nothing else was ever allowed to conflict.

Her cousin Mary [1] was far more of a woman. When she returned to Scotland in 1561 she was a young widow of eighteen. She carried about her from the first an atmosphere of romance. She had beauty, grace, gaiety and wit in such abundance that few could resist her charm; it could penetrate even the walls of a prison; it has penetrated through the mist of centuries, so that even to-day learned men will play tricks with the truth for love of her. She had the spirit and bravery of a gallant boy; there was no quality she adored so much as courage, even in a brute like Bothwell, and none that she despised so much as cowardice —that was the undoing of Darnley. She was extremely clever and resourceful; she could play the game of politics with the skill of an old diplomat, and wait patiently, concealing her aims and her disappointments with a smile. But beneath all this was a nature that could be set aflame by passion. Unlike Elizabeth she could be utterly carried away by hatred or by love, and when that happened, all prudence and calculation went to the winds. She threw away the chance of kingdoms for revenge and a worthless lover.

The ten years 1561-1571 are entirely dominated by the charm and passion and cunning of Mary. During these

[1] There is a short life of Mary Queen of Scots, by F. MacCunn.

years Elizabeth found little difficulty in keeping Philip II. friendly: her sailors had not yet begun to do outrageous things; and the storm in the Netherlands was only brewing. France was no longer dangerous, for civil strife had broken out. The real danger to England, and to the Scottish Protestants, came from Mary. At first she was ostentatiously moderate. She only asked to be recognised as Elizabeth's heiress, which Elizabeth refused, saying that to agree would be to sign her own death-warrant. In Scotland, Mary made no attempt to interfere with the Protestant settlement. She made friends with some of the Protestant leaders, including her half-brother, Lord James, whom she made Earl of Moray. She even joined him in an expedition against the Catholic Earl of Huntly in the Highlands. Moray felt sure that in good time she would marry a Protestant and make friends with Elizabeth, and all would be well. She won the hearts of many followers; and, indeed, the idea of putting a Scottish queen on the English throne was attractive to many Scots. The only man who could resist her charms was grim old John Knox, who thundered at the pretty creature as if she was a criminal. Knox knew that Mary would never be loyal to the cause which was his life. She was probably a sincere Catholic. In any case, she was eager to be Queen of England, and it was as the legitimate Catholic claimant that her chances were strongest.

In 1565 she threw off the mask, by marrying the Catholic Lord Darnley, son of the Earl of Lennox. It was a shrewd move. A foreign match would have alarmed the patriotic feeling both of England and of Scotland. This marriage strengthened her party in both countries, for Darnley was in the line of succession to both crowns. Moray fled to England in dismay. But others had been fully won to her side. Unhappily Darnley, though a good-looking youth, was a mean-spirited and weak-minded person, and his high-spirited wife soon learnt to despise him. Tragedy was brewing. Darnley, slighted and humiliated, conceived a jealousy of the queen's clever Italian secretary, Riccio, who was the closest confidant of her political schemes. He listened to a group of grim Scottish nobles of the Protestant party, who blamed Riccio for the policy Mary was pursuing. On 9th March 1566 they burst into Holyrood Palace, and murdered Riccio almost before the queen's eyes. It was a crime such as had often been done in Scotland. But it turned the girl-queen into a tigress; she was ready to sacrifice everything for revenge. She even

excluded her husband from the christening (1566) of their son—the child who was to unite the English and Scottish crowns. Yet she strove to conceal her wrath and scorn. For the best part of a year she fondled and wheedled the fatuous Darnley. When he fell ill she brought him to a lonely house just outside Edinburgh, where on 9th February 1567 she paid him an affectionate visit. A room had been prepared for her, but she did not stay. That night the house was blown up, with barrels of gunpowder which had been placed in the queen's private room ; and Darnley's murdered body was found in the garden. The murderer was the wild and daring Earl of Bothwell. He had of course to flee from Edinburgh. To the horror of the world, the reckless and infatuated queen fled after him, and married him three months after the murder. There is no reasonable ground for doubting that she had been a partner in his guilt.

This horrible crime ruined Mary's chances not only of succeeding to the English crown, but of retaining her position in Scotland. With the proud courage which never deserted her, she prepared to fight for her crown, and she could still command the loyalty of many. She was defeated at Carberry Hill (1567), forced to abdicate in favour of her infant son, and imprisoned in the island Castle of Loch Leven. But Mary's spirit could not be broken. A year later she escaped from her prison, raised a new army, and took the field. Again she was defeated, at Langside, near Glasgow (May 1568). She would not submit to a fresh imprisonment ; but fled with a few followers, and after a long ride of ninety miles—filled with what thoughts !—crossed the English border, and threw herself on the mercy of her English cousin (May 1568).

It was a shrewd step, based on a profound knowledge of her cousin's character. Elizabeth had too high a sense of ' the divinity that doth hedge a king ' to hand her back to the Scottish nobles. She received her as a guest, and for some years Mary moved from house to house in Northern England. Even when the Scottish nobles brought conclusive evidence of Mary's crime, Elizabeth refused to judge her. And indeed there were some advantages in the situation from Elizabeth's point of view. Mary was under surveillance, and could be kept out of mischief. The Scots were now securely Protestant, and could always be kept in order by the threat of restoring their queen, who still had her loyal followers in Scotland. On the other hand, the witch was dangerous ; especially as the North

of England was the centre of Catholic feeling. From the moment of her arrival Mary was the centre of plots. One of these was discovered in 1569. Mary was to marry the Duke of Norfolk, first of the English nobles. There was to be a rebellion which was to be aided by Alva from the Netherlands; and Mary was to be placed upon her cousin's throne. Norfolk grew frightened at the last, but the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland did actually rebel without waiting for foreign aid. The rising was easily suppressed. It was followed by a rebellion of the border Lord Dacre in 1570, which was also swiftly suppressed. Even this was not the end of the conspiracies. Just at this moment (1570) the Pope issued the long-threatened excommunication of Elizabeth as a heretic, by which all her Catholic subjects were released from their allegiance. A papal agent, Ridolfi, revived, on a more elaborate scale, the plot of 1569, whereby Mary was to marry Norfolk, and a Catholic insurrection was to be aided by an invasion from the Netherlands. Mary herself, Norfolk, the Pope, Philip II. and the Duke of Alva were all parties to the plot. But it was discovered by the astuteness of Cecil, before any overt steps had been taken (1571). Norfolk was sent to the block. Mary was left untouched; but, having shown herself a very dangerous person, she was kept in stricter confinement for the future.

These events closed the first era of the struggle. They cleared the air; and during the next period, which may be said to extend from 1571 to 1584, the issues of the great conflict became more and more clear.

§ 3. *Years of Intensifying Strain*, 1571-1584.

In the first place, the relations between England and Scotland, though still often difficult, were no longer very dangerous. On the whole the Scottish Protestant party steadily maintained the upper hand; and the Kirk, with its General Assembly, representing the whole nation, was able in some degree to balance the power of the nobles. From 1567 to 1578 Scotland was ruled by a succession of regents, on behalf of the boy king, James VI. The first of these, the Earl of Moray—the 'good Lord James'—was the staunchest supporter of the new religion, and next to John Knox had taken the greatest part in winning its triumph: he was devoted to the English alliance. He was unhappily murdered in 1570. But his successors, Lennox, Mar and

Morton, steadily followed a Protestant and English policy, and were able to hold their own against the party favourable to the exiled queen, which was still strong. They disappointed the ministers by their failure to transfer the endowments of the old Church to the new—nearly all the wealth of the old Church being annexed by the nobles. But at least they maintained the Protestant settlement. From 1579 to 1582 the situation again became dangerous, for a Franco-Scot, Esmé Stewart, Sieur d'Aubigny and later Earl of Lennox, arrived from France with the object of re-establishing French influence, and obtained for a time a complete ascendency over the boy king, now thirteen years old. His aim was to revive the cause of the exiled queen, and to restore the Catholic system. But he was staunchly resisted by the Protestant group of nobles and by the General Assembly of the Kirk, led by Andrew Melville. He could not prevent the acceptance of the full Presbyterian system in 1581; and in 1582 a group of Protestant nobles suddenly seized the person of the king, in what is known as the Ruthven Raid, and compelled d'Aubigny-Lennox to flee from the country. Henceforward, though King James VI. as he grew older became more and more hostile to the Presbyterian system, he was neither hostile to Protestantism nor to England. He was kept quiet partly by fear of his subjects and partly by the hope of succeeding to the English throne. Thus on the whole during these years the friendship of the sister-nations, though not yet intimate, was maintained; and Elizabeth could generally feel that she had no danger to fear from the side of Scotland.

In England the conspiracies and rebellions of 1569-71 produced a very great effect. They deeply discredited the Catholic party. The fact that the Catholics had actually been anxious to bring Spanish armies into England made them appear unpatriotic. Protestantism became, more clearly than ever, the religion of patriots, and patriotic Catholics began to drift into the national Church in increasing numbers. There were still unending conspiracies. But they were now mainly fomented by secret emissaries from the Continent, and joined only by knots of extremists; and the mere facts that they still continued, and that they were engineered from abroad, made the mass of Englishmen more vehemently anti-Roman. It was becoming every year more clear that England must look forward to a struggle for her national existence, in which the supreme enemy would

be Spain, and in which the cause of national freedom would necessarily be identified with the cause of Protestantism. Hitherto there had been no persecution of Roman Catholics. But in 1571 the law of treason was extended to include such acts as joining, or persuading others to join, the Church of Rome, or obeying a papal bull. This was the natural result of the bull of excommunication of 1570, which commanded loyal Catholics to play the part of traitors to the national government. Now first began a definite persecution of Roman Catholics, but it was limited to those who plotted the overthrow of the government. The mass of quiet Roman Catholics, so long as they did not meddle in politics, were left undisturbed; their only penalty was the payment of fines for non-attendance at church. The dangerous people were the Roman missionaries, who began during these years to venture into England. Some of them came from the seminaries for the training of English priests which were being founded abroad, at Douai and Rome; their first band of missionaries came to England in 1574. Others were English members of the great Order of Jesuits; the first of these to reach England were Campion and Parsons, who came in 1580. It is impossible not to admire the courage shown by these missionaries. But it is also impossible not to recognise that, as things were, they were necessarily emissaries of treason as well as of Catholicism, and that the government could not safely leave them at large. Some of them were imprisoned, others put to death. But they were sentenced always for treason, not for their religious beliefs. Between 1575, when the executions began, and the end of the reign 187 victims suffered the penalty of death. This is a considerable number; but it is as nothing in comparison with the holocausts of victims who suffered for their religion in the Netherlands, in France and in Spain. In France, for example, over ten thousand Protestants lost their lives in the single butchery of St. Bartholomew's Day, in 1572—just three years before the Elizabethan persecution began. Even as compared with the relatively light persecution of Mary, the persecution of Roman Catholics under Elizabeth was mild. The average number of victims per annum was seven, as compared with eighty for each year of the Marian persecution.

A further feature of these years in England was that, just because the struggle between the two religions was growing more intense, the extreme Protestant party became more active, and thus the Elizabethan compromise was

threatened from both sides at once. From the first the extremists had been dissatisfied with the amount of 'papistry' which, in their view, was allowed to remain in the national Church. At least four 'Puritan' extremists were burnt for heresy, while others were hanged for the treason of denying the royal supremacy. The seeds of Puritanism, and the demand for individual freedom of thought, were actively germinating. And it is significant that in Parliament sympathy with the Puritans was strong and growing. As the crisis of her fate drew nearer, England was becoming more intensely Protestant.

Meanwhile on the Continent the conflict of the religions was becoming more acute. In 1572—the year of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in France—a new revolt broke out in the Netherlands, so formidable that it was never to be crushed. It was begun by the 'Beggars of the Sea,' who had hitherto devoted themselves to preying on Spanish trade, largely using English ports as their bases. Elizabeth had ordered them away from her harbours, apparently as a concession to Spain; but it is probable that she knew what she was doing. They descended upon the Dutch port of Brill, and captured it; and thereupon the northern provinces (now the kingdom of Holland) flared out into rebellion, and placed themselves under the lead of the noble patriot William the Silent.[1] Spain found it impossible to crush them. Within five years the revolt had spread to the southern provinces (modern Belgium), and it appeared as if Philip II. was to lose the whole of his northern dominions. Many Englishmen were eager to go to the aid of the Netherlanders. Elizabeth was too cautious to risk, as yet, such an open breach with Spain; but she gave them secret help and encouragement in many indirect ways, and welcomed the intervention of France on their side.

From 1578, however, things began to go wrong with the Netherlands. Alexander of Parma, a very able general in the service of Spain, was gradually reconquering the southern provinces, in which the Roman Catholic faith was still predominant. Protestant Englishmen watched his successes with intense anxiety, and longed to give direct and open aid in a cause which, as they were convinced, was identical with their own. But Elizabeth still held her hand. In 1584 the noble William of Orange, heart and soul of the

[1] There is a life of William the Silent, by Ruth Putnam, in the Heroes of the Nations Series.

Dutch resistance, was murdered by a Roman Catholic assassin; and the cause of the Netherlands, and with them of Protestantism, seemed to be in a desperate case. When the resistance of the Dutch was broken, all men believed that England's turn would come.

In France also the struggle was becoming more desperate during these years. Elizabeth was anxious beyond everything to prevent France from joining hands with Spain. Her method, during these years, was no longer that of giving direct help to the French Protestants, but that of holding out the prospect that she would marry a French prince. She was busy flirting with Henry, Duke of Anjou, brother of the French king, in 1570 and 1571. Then came the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572, ordered by the French king and his mother, which sent a shudder of dismay and horror through all the Protestant lands. Yet before long, to the disgust and alarm of many of her subjects, Elizabeth was again busy with French marriage negotiations, this time with the Duke of Alençon, who later succeeded to his brother's title of Duke of Anjou. For ten dreary years the empty flirtation continued; it did not end till 1582. Elizabeth had of course never for a moment meant to marry either of these princes; but she believed, perhaps rightly, that she was helping to prevent a Franco-Spanish combination against England. Meanwhile the French wars of religion were raging at intervals: there were four distinct wars between 1572 and 1584. But in 1584, by the death of the last direct heir to the French throne, the leader of the Huguenots, Henry of Navarre,[1] became the heir-apparent. The prospect of the succession of a Protestant to the French throne aroused the more extreme French Catholics to fury; they formed themselves into a league of resistance, under the lead of the Duke of Guise, Mary Stewart's cousin, and made formal alliance with Philip II. If they should win (and they were the stronger party), the combination of France and Spain, which had been dreaded ever since 1559, would become a reality. Thus in every way the year 1584 represented a crisis in the fortunes of England and of Protestantism.

Moreover Philip II. had by this time made up his slow mind that a direct attack upon England was necessary. He had hoped against hope that the Protestant queen would be overthrown by a Catholic rising, and had been

[1] There is a life of Henry of Navarre, by P. F. Willert, in the Heroes of the Nations Series.

always ready to give his assistance; but every plot had failed. His decision was helped by the fact that, since 1570, the English sailors had been making ever more daring raids against the Spanish empire in the New World: the most dazzling achievements of Drake belong to these years, and although Elizabeth was always ready to disavow them, she lent royal ships to these insolent pirates. We shall see something of their achievements in the next chapter; they were dangerously undermining the prestige of Spain, and it was impossible for Philip even to pretend to overlook them any longer.

In all ways, therefore, it had become obvious by 1584 that the crisis was at hand. Goliath had decided that David must be destroyed; and in his slow way he spent the following years in preparing a crushing blow. In the eyes of Europe it seemed inevitable that England must succumb. For to all appearance Spain was at the very height of her power. In Europe Philip dominated Italy; the Emperor was his cousin; the most powerful party in divided France had accepted his protection; his armies, under Parma, the greatest captain of the age, had already subjugated half of the revolting Netherlands, and seemed to be getting the better of the Dutch provinces of the north; his navy had in 1571 won a resounding victory over the Turks at Lepanto. Outside Europe he was master of all the wealth of the New World, which poured a vast annual tribute into his treasury. More than that, he had in 1580 annexed Portugal, and added her immense and rich Eastern empire to his own. He bestrode the world like a Colossus. Who could hope that England could stand against him—England which possessed no trained army at all, and whose only defence lay in the ships of her daring pirate sailors?

§ 4. *The Open Conflict with Spain and the Execution of Mary.*

From 1584 onwards the struggle became more open. In 1585 Elizabeth at last resolved to throw in her lot with the Netherlands. She accepted a protectorate of the Dutch provinces, and agreed to provide five thousand foot and one thousand horse. To command this force she sent her favourite, Leicester—a very unhappy choice. Leicester won no success; he quarrelled with his Dutch allies. His expedition is redeemed only by the memory of Sir Philip Sidney's chivalrous death at Zutphen; and in 1587 Leicester was back home again. But the important thing was that

this intervention was an act of war. The open struggle had begun. In the same year 1585 Philip also had committed an act of war by laying an embargo upon all English ships in Spanish harbours. Elizabeth was not content to retaliate in kind. She sent out Drake with a great fleet to sack and pillage the Spanish cities of the West Indies.

Meanwhile Mary Queen of Scots still pined in prison. Her youth had gone. All the schemes of her friends had failed. Her only hope now rested in Philip of Spain; in 1586 she made a will disinheriting her son, and making Philip her heir. What help should she give in the coming crisis? A Catholic rising on a large scale in England was now impossible. But she still had loyal friends, among them Anthony Babington, a Derbyshire gentleman, who had once been her page. Babington was approached by a priest to join with a group of others in a plot to dispose of Elizabeth 'by poison or steel,' and with her to get rid of her formidable ministers, Burghley, Walsingham and others. And Mary consented to write to Babington with her own hand, urging him 'to be diligent in her service.' Alas! all the letters of the conspirators, and every step they took, came to the knowledge of Secretary Walsingham. He let their plot ripen; then, in August 1586, arrested them all. Fourteen of them were executed; but not until Babington had explained the cipher used in his correspondence with Mary.

Walsingham had long been anxious to be rid of Mary, the centre of unceasing conspiracy; but his mistress had always refused to take the irrevocable step. Mary was now tried before a special commission at her prison of Fotheringay, and found guilty of complicity in the plot. Both Houses of Parliament unanimously petitioned the queen for Mary's execution. She replied begging them to consider whether there were no other means; and Parliament replied that there was none. Was this all a piece of playing to the gallery? Clearly it was not; it arose from Elizabeth's feeling that the seal of sovereignty was indelible, and that no earthly tribunal had the right to try an anointed queen. She signed the warrant, but tried to thrust the onus of executing it on her servants: the Privy Council found it necessary to assume the responsibility itself. On the 8th February 1587, in the hall of Fotheringay Castle, Mary met her death on the scaffold with a dignified courage which almost obliterates the memory of her misdeeds. In the eyes of all good Catholics she died a martyr to the faith;

her death sent a shudder of horror through Europe, for men still owned the sanctity of God's anointed; and the great array of tall ships which Philip II. was already gathering at Cadiz and at Lisbon was looked to as the destined avenger of a great crime. But as the news of the decisive act passed through England, bells rang and bonfires blazed. The die was cast; England must fight for her life, and, trusting in her seamen, she fronted the issue unafraid.

[Pollard's *England from the Death of Henry VIII. to the Death of Elizabeth* is the best modern summary of the period. Froude's *History of England* is a vivid and enchaining narrative, and is less open to challenge on this period than on the reign of Henry VIII. Lord Acton deals with the subject of this chapter in one of his *Lectures on Modern History*, and one of Macaulay's essays deals with *Burghley*. See also Hay Fleming's *Mary Queen of Scots*. For contemporary European history see Johnson, *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*, Ranke's *History of the Popes*, Froude's *Council of Trent*, Ward's *Counter-Reformation*, Armstrong's *French Wars of Religion*. Motley's *Revolt of the Netherlands* is an admirable narrative of great events.]

CHAPTER VIII

THE ENGLISH SEAMEN, AND THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA

§ 1. *The Search for New Trade Outlets.*

When Philip II. at last determined that England must be crushed, the whole world was convinced that the doom of the island State was sealed. For not only was the King of Spain beyond all comparison the most powerful potentate in the world; not only had his troops the reputation of being all but invincible, while England had no regular army at all: even at sea, the main defence of the islands, he seemed to be irresistible. His fleets had in 1571 played a main part in overthrowing the naval power of the Turks at Lepanto. He disposed of all the great ships that were practised by the constant passage of the Atlantic. And to all his other resources he had, in 1580, added the naval strength of Portugal. Even to the most patriotic Englishmen, even to the boldest of English sailors, the odds in favour of Spain seemed to be overwhelmingly great.

Yet we can now see that the project of invading England from the sea with Spanish forces was from the first doomed to failure, unless the English wholly failed to use their advantages. It was doomed to failure because the English had, during the generation preceding the Armada, taught themselves new methods of sea warfare, while the Spaniards had been content to continue in the old ways. What had given this advantage to the English—what had made the sea, at last, their element—was a long series of wild adventures pursued by individual Englishmen.[1] In the sea war, as in other respects, it was the individual enterprise of a freedom-loving people rather than the organised power of the State which saved England and built her greatness. Taught by experience, the seamen had wrought out new devices in the structure, manning, arming and working of ships; and these devices were forced upon them just

[1] A vivid account of these affairs is to be found in Froude's *English Seamen of the Sixteenth Century.*

because they had to depend upon their own resources. Many of the enterprises in which these men were engaged were of a dubious, even of a disreputable, character. But beyond any question they made it possible for England to save herself, and the islands, and perhaps Europe, from the dominance of Spain; they established the maritime supremacy of England; and at the same time they won for the world the Freedom of the Seas. For since that time no power has ventured to claim, as Spain claimed, the right to exclude all other nations from some of the most important seas of the world.

Many of the most interesting enterprises of the period were undertaken purely for the purpose of opening out new lines of trade; for English traders were eagerly looking for openings which would enable them to compete with Spain and Portugal, and especially to get access to the lucrative traffic of the East and the tropical regions, which Spain and Portugal monopolised. Several voyages were made from time to time to the Guinea Coast of West Africa —the earliest by William Hawkins of Plymouth, as early as 1528. But the Portuguese regarded these as illicit invasions of their sphere, and until the English were ready to challenge boldly the papal award of 1493, and to assert by force their rights of trade, there was little chance in this direction. Several ventures were made to Constantinople and the Eastern Mediterranean, the ancient sources of Eastern goods. But trade in the Turkish realms was never easy, and the competition of the Italians was for a long time too strong. At a later date, indeed, trade in this region grew to considerable dimensions. A treaty was made with Turkey in 1580; a Levant Company was started in 1581, and there were English agencies at Constantinople; while in 1583 Ralph Fitch commenced from Aleppo an eight years' journey, which took him to Persia, India and far Siam. But these developments were only made possible by the extraordinary growth of English prestige on the sea, won in other fields.

Soon men began to be fascinated by the idea of finding a back way to the East, either round the north of Asia, or round the north of America—a north-east passage, or a north-west passage. The north-east passage was first attempted. In 1553 Willoughby and Chancellor set out round the North Cape. Willoughby was wrecked, but Chancellor got as far as Archangel, and thence overland to Moscow. From this beginning a trade with Russia was

opened out. In 1558 Anthony Jenkinson made his way by this route down the Volga and across the Caspian to Bokhara—a wonderful journey. But the hope of getting at the East by so toilsome a route was vain; it was soon demonstrated that the north-eastern route could not be profitably pursued beyond Archangel; and though some trade with Russia was developed by a Muscovy Company established for the purpose, men's hopes soon turned in other directions. Even the Russian trade was mainly carried on by way of the Baltic, and here the English traders had to deal with the hostility of the Hanseatic merchants; their ships must always be ready to fight. The attempt to find a north-east passage thus led to very little. But the men and the ships which could face these rough seas were capable of great things.

It was not until a good deal later that serious attempts were made to find a north-west passage—at a time when friction with Spain was very acute, and when Drake had already begun to ravage the West Indies. In 1576-8 Martin Frobisher made three bold voyages into the lands of the Esquimaux; in three voyages during 1585-7 John Davis explored the coasts of Greenland and the Straits that bear his name. The gallantry of these adventures with tiny ships in stormy, ice-bound and uncharted seas was beyond praise.[1] But they only showed that there was no easy passage by this route, and polar exploration for its own sake had little attraction for the Elizabethan. Plainly, if England was to have a share of the traffic of the tropics, it could only be by forcibly breaking down the monopoly of Spain and Portugal, which by 1580 had become the monopoly of Spain alone.

§ 2. *The Pirates of the Narrow Seas.*

Meanwhile the adventurous spirit of English seamen had found an outlet in another sphere. They had taken in large numbers to what can only be described as piracy in the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay, where they preyed upon the stream of shipping that passed especially between Spain and her possessions in the Netherlands. Piracy had always been common in these waters, and indeed in all waters. There was no law and no peace upon the sea, which no power controlled; for the very idea of international law scarcely yet existed, and the pirate's trade

[1] For Elizabethan explorations in the Polar seas, see Atlas, Plate 49 (*b*).

was regarded as quite respectable. In Edward VI.'s reign, when religious differences began to give a greater force to this irregular war against the great Catholic power, and English gentlemen began to take to piracy, the king's own uncle, Sir Thomas Seymour, Lord High Admiral of England, turned the Scilly Islands into a nest of pirates. But it was in the reign of Mary that piratical adventures began to be widely regarded as patriotic. They afforded the easiest means of protesting against the humiliating subordination of England to Spain, and against the fires of Smithfield. A note of ferocity came into this irregular war, waged by men who could count upon no help or support but their own. The creeks and bays of the south coast, and especially of Devon, lent themselves admirably to these adventures, and many young Devon men of good family, as well as many mere scoundrels, threw themselves with zest into this daring and lawless career. They believed they were fighting for the freedom of England and for the Protestant faith, and avenging the deaths and tortures of many English sailors seized by the Spanish Inquisition. And the rich plunder which they often won did not diminish their ardour.

But it was from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign onwards that this fierce, irregular sea war became most active, because it was now plain how precarious the position of England was, and how great the danger of a Spanish attack if ever Philip's hands were free. Spanish ambassadors protested bitterly, but in vain. Elizabeth disavowed all responsibility for the pirates. But she did nothing to check them. She was not sorry that Spain should learn that the English could fight, and that these waters were dangerous.

Nor were the English alone engaged in these adventures. Alva's persecution in the Netherlands drove patriotic Dutchmen to take to sea warfare, and the 'Beggars of the Sea,' as they called themselves, had their position partly regularised, according to the ideas of the time, by 'letters of marque,' which William of Orange issued. Until 1572 they freely used English harbours as their bases, and devoted themselves to cutting off the supplies sent from Spain to crush their compatriots. Huguenot sailors from France also joined in the grim game, carrying 'letters of marque' from the Prince of Condé. Their principal base was La Rochelle, but they often used English harbours. English, French and Dutch united in a tacit partnership against

the common enemy, and combined to make the passage of the Channel exceedingly unsafe, especially for Spanish ships. As early as 1562 we are told that there were four hundred English and French raiders in the Channel, and that they had taken seven hundred prizes. Elizabeth rejoiced that it should be so, and gave underhand help, though she dared not give open recognition. In 1568—when the plot of the northern earls to enthrone Mary of Scots with Spanish help was maturing—the Huguenot rovers chased into Southampton a Spanish fleet, laden with treasure borrowed from Genoese bankers, and destined for the Netherlands—possibly also for an army of invasion for England. Elizabeth calmly took possession of the treasure 'for greater safety,' and later arranged to borrow the money for her own purposes from the Genoese.

In effect the pirates of the Channel were engaged in a private and irregular war against an overwhelming power which their country dared not yet defy. Their highly improper proceedings—which were sometimes defiled by gross cruelty—undoubtedly hampered the King of Spain, helped to prevent him from crushing the revolt of the Netherlands, and delayed his inevitable onslaught on England till she was ready to resist. But above all they trained a breed of very daring and efficient sailors, who had learnt to despise their Spanish foes, and to encounter the most desperate adventures unafraid.

From these illicit and irregular enterprises sprang new methods of sea warfare, which were to prove their efficacy in the South Seas and in the Armada fights. The Spaniards still clung to the old ideas. Their notion of sea warfare was that it ought to be as like land warfare as possible; they filled their ships with soldiers armed as for the field, and often sea-sick in rough weather; and they gave to their sailors, whom they regarded as inferiors, merely the duty of bringing their ships alongside the enemy, in order that the soldiers might board, and fight with pike and musket and sword. Their ships were great clumsy structures, not easily worked. For fighting, their experience in the calmer waters of the south had taught them to trust largely to galleys and galleasses, partly worked by slaves at the oar. Because their notion of fighting demanded close quarters they paid little attention to gunnery, and frequently carried only a few guns, high up at the bow and at the stern: these guns could make a noise, but because of their height they felt the full motion of the ship, which disturbed their

aim; and they could not fire a broadside volley. The pirates had to invent quite other methods. They needed swift and light vessels, which could sail close to the wind, manœuvre easily, and get away from superior strength; and they developed methods of rigging their ships which, though mainly suitable for small vessels, enabled them easily to outmanœuvre the Spanish floating castles. The crews of their small vessels had to be ready to fight as well as to work the ship, and their methods of fighting were not those of the land. And since their aim was always to avoid close quarters they paid great attention to gunnery. Small as they were, they commonly carried more and heavier guns than the Spaniards; they could fire a broadside; and as their guns were fired from near the water, they could inflict great damage upon the towering Spanish ships. The pirate ships had to be small, partly because private adventurers could not afford big ships, but mainly because the easily worked fore-and-aft rigging was only suitable for small vessels. But though many of them must have seemed like mosquitoes in comparison with the proud galleons of Spain, they moved so nimbly that there was no dealing with them. These new methods of sea warfare, gradually developed during the age of piracy, ultimately ensured the defeat of the Armada. In the meanwhile they made possible the daring and intoxicating adventures of the Spanish Main, for which they were a preparation.

§ 3. *Drake and the Adventures of the Spanish Main.*

The failure of attempts to find back ways to the East, or lines of trade which could compensate for exclusion from the tropics, had made it plain that it was only by a direct challenge to the Spanish and Portuguese monopoly, supported if need be by force, that English enterprise could be given a new start. Now that England was Protestant, there was no longer a religious motive for respecting the papal award of 1493, under which this monopoly was maintained. The English government dared not yet issue an open challenge. But English sailors were very ready to give it on their own account; and, under the rose, Elizabeth was very ready that they should do so. She was even willing to lend them royal ships for these adventures, provided that there was no open war against Spain, and that she got her full share of the profit. In this challenge two stages may be recognised. The first was the stage of

honest trade, based on a denial of Spain's right to prevent it, and backed by the employment of force when the right of access was refused. This naturally and inevitably led to a second stage of downright, if irregular, war, when the Spaniard declined to abandon his policy of exclusion. Though many men took part in these enterprises, and achieved romantic deeds, these two stages are pre-eminently summed up and represented by the work of two cousins, both Devon men—John Hawkins and Francis Drake ; [1] of whom the latter was to find, in this sphere, the chance of proving himself a veritable hero of romance, the supreme representative of the gallantry and daring of the Elizabethan sea-dogs.

Hawkins was the son of the William Hawkins who had ventured to Guinea in 1528, and it was to the trade between Guinea and Spanish America that his mind naturally turned. The staple of this trade was negro slaves, who were imported to America to take the place of the rapidly decreasing natives. Nobody of that age dreamed of objecting to this horrible traffic on its own account. It had been recommended on humanitarian grounds by a very honest Spanish ecclesiastic, the apostle of Spanish America, Las Casas. But neither Spain nor Portugal wanted to see outsiders meddling in it. On the other hand, the Spanish colonists wanted more negroes than they could get, and were willing to pay high prices for them ; and Hawkins denied the right of Portugal to prevent him from getting negroes, or of Spain to forbid him to sell them. In 1562 and 1564 he made highly successful and profitable voyages, in the second of which Queen Elizabeth was a partner. He did not hesitate to use force when Spanish officials tried to prevent him from carrying on his trade : sometimes a show of force was alone needed, for the Spaniards were eager to buy. But the ease with which he overcame serious opposition when it was offered showed that, with sufficient daring, the Spanish empire could be readily assaulted. Hawkins prided himself upon always doing an honest deal when he came to trade : he used violence only to open his markets. In 1567-8 he undertook his third and biggest venture. This time the queen lent him two ships ; and Francis Drake went with him in command of one of his smaller vessels. After a prosperous voyage he was compelled to put into San Juan de Ullua, on the Mexican coast, for repairs. The

[1] There is a brilliant short life of Drake, by Sir Julian Corbett, in the English Men of Action Series.

Spanish treasure fleet was there, but Hawkins did not touch it, true to his rôle of peaceful trader. A Spanish war fleet came to the harbour: Hawkins could certainly have barred its passage, but he preferred to bargain that he should be allowed to finish his repairs and go home. Suddenly the Spanish admiral, breaking his pledge, attacked the unprepared English in the confined waters of the harbour, where they could not use their customary manœuvres. One of the queen's ships, and nearly all the profits of the voyage, had to be abandoned; and Hawkins and Drake reached England with only two small vessels in a battered condition.

This was the end of the attempt at peaceful trading in Spanish America: the sort of end that was bound to come. The news was received with fury in England. It gave to Elizabeth one of her pretexts for seizing the Spanish treasure-ships in Southampton. But, above all, it made Francis Drake resolve to wage war on his own account, without disguise and without hesitation, against the Spanish dominion in America. And this thickset young man with the steel-blue eyes proved himself a terrible foe. He had plied the seas since his boyhood. He had traded to the Netherlands, and conceived a hatred of Spain's methods there; to Spain itself, and seen English victims of the Inquisition. Now and henceforward he had no other aim in life but war with Spain; and war with Spain he waged unrelentingly, till the day when, in 1596, he was buried off Porto Bello, in the seas where his name had for so long been a terror. *El Draque* means in Spanish 'the Dragon'; and a dragon indeed he was for more than twenty years to Spain. For generations after his death Spanish children were frightened to sleep by threats of *El Draque*.

We cannot here tell all the story of his incredible deeds. No enterprise was too daring for him: he would attack a fortress with a handful of tarry sailors, or cut out a great ship twice the size of his own from under the very guns of forts, or venture in a mere cockleshell of a ship into seas unknown and full of enemies. Yet there was always method in his madness, and a sort of wild humorous ingenuity in the devices he adopted. One rule he made for himself, which distinguished him from most of his fierce contemporaries. He never took the lives of non-combatants.

Of his many voyages and adventures three alone can be recorded. In 1572 (after two previous voyages about which we know very little) he set out with two ships, one of

seventy tons, the other of twenty-five, and a crew of seventy-three all told, to attack the Spanish American empire at its heart. For a moment he captured and seized the town of Nombre de Dios,[1] where the Spanish treasures coming across the Isthmus of Panama were shipped for Europe, but had to retire before he could seize the stacks of silver bars which he found there. He attacked the fortified port of Cartagena, and carried out in triumph to the sea a big ship which was loading at the quay. He landed on the isthmus, all unknown, and, with the aid of some wild half-breeds with whom he made friends, stopped the great train of mules carrying the annual produce of the Peruvian mines across to Nombre de Dios, and loaded the best of it on his ship. He stopped and searched over two hundred vessels in the Caribbean Sea, relieving them of their treasure; and all the time never hurt a woman or an unarmed man. Then homewards, loaded to the scuppers with his spoil. As he passed Cartagena he saw all the great treasure-ships crowded together for safety. With characteristic bravado he stood close in, and ran past them with the flag of St. George at the masthead and all his pennons streaming. He reached England again in August 1573.

During this voyage he had seen, from the isthmus, the waters of the Pacific, hitherto the sole preserve of Spain. To dare these inviolate waters was the next project of his glorious insolence; though the only known approach was through the dangerous Straits of Magellan, past which he must count on no help, and no place of refuge. After a spell of service in Irish waters, he managed to form a company to supply him with a little fleet; and plenty of volunteers of spirit were eager to join him. In the background was the queen, whom he had secretly interviewed: Philip II. was threatening, and she was glad to find a means of annoying him. In December 1577 Drake sailed from Plymouth with the *Pelican* of 100 tons, the *Elizabeth* of 80 tons, the *Marygold* of 30 tons, all well gunned, together with the provision ship *Swan* of 50 tons, and a pinnace called the *Christopher*.

Even with this force it was a bold endeavour to force a way into the Pacific. But the squadron was soon to be reduced to very modest dimensions. The *Swan* was broken up for firewood and the *Christopher* abandoned before he had reached the straits. Then, after that tortuous and dangerous passage had been safely negotiated, a violent

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 53.

storm scattered the remaining ships. The *Marygold* foundered. The *Elizabeth's* captain gave up heart and sailed home again. Drake was left alone with the *Pelican*, now rechristened the *Golden Hind*, a vessel of 100 tons, alone on the far side of the world. Who could have blamed him if he had abandoned his enterprise? Instead he sailed boldly up the coast of Chile; seized Valparaiso and revictualled there, capturing a useful pilot; landed at one point after another to capture trains of treasure; entered the very harbour of Callao, where the Peruvian treasure was shipped for the isthmus, and, finding that a rich load had just been sent off, pursued and captured the ship that carried it, and took from it thirteen chests of pieces of eight, 80 lbs. weight of gold, and untold jewels: the silver previously captured had to be used as ballast. With such a burthen it was worth going home. But the Spaniards would be waiting on the route by which he had come. He resolved to return by the north-west passage, and settle that problem once for all. But he sailed north and north till he reached the latitude of Vancouver, without discovering any passage; and, giving up this plan, he landed in California, near San Francisco (he called the land New Albion) to make ready for a voyage homeward by the Cape of Good Hope. It was a tremendous venture, only less marvellous than Magellan's earlier circumnavigation. But it was successfully accomplished, though with much weariness and peril. The *Golden Hind*, with its priceless cargo, laboured into Plymouth in the autumn of 1580. The secrets of the great Spanish empire were England's; the innermost penetralia of her power had been invaded and explored, and she had been able to do nothing to protect them. In Drake's absence the party which favoured peace with Spain had been his enemies; his troubles with some of his gentlemen volunteers, which we have not been able to touch upon, had been fomented by their agents in his ships. But the treasure which he sent in loaded caravans to London, and the exultation which his amazing exploits aroused in all Englishmen, overcame all that. Elizabeth herself went down to the *Golden Hind*, and knighted the 'master thief of the unknown world.'

So good a sword as that of Drake could not be left to rust. In 1585, when the long simmering conflict between Spain and England broke into open war, when Philip was beginning to plan his Armada, when the English troops were being sent to the aid of the revolting Netherlanders,

Drake was called upon to go once more to the West Indies, this time no longer to wage private war, but with a royal commission, and in command of a national enterprise. He was given a fleet of two ships of the line and eighteen cruisers, with attendant vessels, and a force of 2300 soldiers and sailors. With these he sailed first to Vigo in Spain itself, as if to give contemptuous warning of his intentions; then to the Cape Verde Islands, whose chief town, Santiago, was sacked and burnt; and then straight for the West Indies. No plundering raid was this, but an act of war. The strong walled city of San Domingo, the capital of the Spanish American dominions, and the rich town of Cartagena, capital of the 'Spanish Main,' were in turn stormed, plundered, and held to ransom, while all the ships which had crowded for refuge to their harbours were burnt. Sickness among his crews prevented Drake from crowning the enterprise by the capture of Panama. But on his way home he destroyed a Spanish settlement on the coast of Florida, relieved Raleigh's exhausted colony of Virginia, and only missed the annual treasure fleet by twelve hours. Not by accident, but in the most open way, and as it were after due notice, the strongholds of the Spanish empire had been destroyed, and the weakness of the colossus revealed. The blow to Philip's prestige was immense. The limitless possibilities of the new naval warfare were revealed. One is tempted to wonder why men did not see that the Great Armada was already defeated in advance.

Drake does not stand alone among the sea-dogs of Elizabeth, though he stands supreme. But the thrilling exploits of his fellows cannot be narrated here, even in the baldest way. Their record, a record worthy of them, is to be found in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, that epic of English sailormen.[1] But one aspect of their work, not yet touched upon, deserves to be noted. Some of them were bent not only upon commerce, or upon hampering Spain, but upon founding new Englands in the vast lands across the Atlantic. Here, said Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in a book published in 1576, should be found a home for needy Englishmen; and in 1578 he obtained a charter 'to inhabit and possess at his choice all remote and heathen lands not in the actual possession of any Christian prince.' In 1583 Gilbert set

[1] An excellent selection from Hakluyt is published by the Clarendon Press; edited by E. J. Payne under the title, *Voyages of Elizabethan Seamen*. There is another selection by C. R. Beazley. Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* captures something of the spirit of the time.

forth with five ships to plant a colony in Newfoundland, which the English had claimed since Cabot's discovery in 1497. He started a settlement at St. John's, the first English colony; but he was drowned in a storm on his return, and could not nurture his infant settlement into strength. Gilbert's half-brother was Sir Walter Raleigh, who took up his projects. In 1584 he sent an expedition to find a suitable site for a colony north of Florida, and next year Sir Richard Grenville was sent with seven ships to plant a settlement at Roanoke, in the smiling land which was christened Virginia, in honour of the virgin queen. But the colony got into difficulties, and the colonists had to be brought home by Drake (1586). In 1587 Raleigh sent out 150 settlers to renew the experiment; but by 1590 they were all scattered. These were the first English attempts at colonisation, the first driblets of that vast stream of migrants who have flowed from the islands in so many directions. Colonisation was not the *forte* of the Elizabethans; the men who achieved such marvels in adventure and in war were not the men to face the duller labours of settlement. Their task was to break down the barriers and prepare the way; to throw open the pathways of the seas for the coming and going of the islanders, and of all the world.

§ 4. *The Spanish Armada.*

Before that task was finished the final challenge of Spain had to be met; and for that Philip was now laboriously preparing. His best sea-captain, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, was working out the plan of the great operation while Drake was sacking the Spanish cities in the West. He proposed to concentrate in the Channel the whole naval might of Spain, and to disembark from a fleet of over 500 sail an army of over 50,000 with a hundred guns. Though the plans were later changed, the size of the fleet was much reduced, and the task of organising the invasion was transferred to the Duke of Parma, in the main the conception of the great expedition remained; a fleet big enough to crush all opposition was to hold the Channel, and transport to England an army beyond the power of English forces to resist. Preparations began at once. The expedition was fixed for the summer of 1587; vast stores were already being accumulated; and ships were under orders to rendezvous at Lisbon and Cadiz from all quarters.

All through the spring of 1587 the ships were gathering and the dockyard men were busy in the harbours of Cadiz and Lisbon. But they were not allowed to finish their task in peace. On 29th April a squadron of six-and-twenty English ships appeared off Cadiz harbour; and the admiral in command was the terrible *Draque*. The harbour was full of transports and storeships; and there were ten galleys too, and galleys were held to be irresistible in confined and calm waters. But Drake, boldly sailing into the harbour, turned the galleys into mere sinking shambles by well-directed volleys, and then proceeded to plunder and burn all the other vessels, including eighteen half-fitted great-ships. That done he withdrew, having very effectually, in his own characteristic phrase, 'singed the King of Spain's beard.' In the open seas he captured and destroyed some twenty-four vessels, many of them bringing supplies for the Armada. He hung about off the Portuguese coast till June, but no squadron of the main Armada in Lisbon was ready to come out for him. Before he returned to England he captured the great East Indiaman, *San Felipe*, the biggest ship afloat, with a cargo of gold and gems, silk and spices, worth something like a million of our money: the richest prize ever yet seen in England. Well might the Spaniards dread *El Draque*, and the English feel confident in the coming fight, which this daring raid postponed for a whole year.

Ere the great fleet was ready again it had lost its able and brave captain, Santa Cruz; and, as if the fates were luring him to his ruin, Philip II. insisted upon filling his place with a man wholly ignorant of the sea, and lacking in all gifts of leadership—the Duke of Medina Sidonia, whose only claim was that he was one of the greatest of Spanish nobles. Incapable of vigour, Medina Sidonia delayed the sailing of the great fleet from February to May, 1588; even when it sailed, it was scattered by a storm, and forced to refit in Spanish harbours, and it was the 19th of July before it sighted English land.

It was a very great and splendid fleet which came crowding up the Channel; a fleet of 130 vessels, of which 77 were fighting galleons, seven of them being over 1000 tons, and the average over 550 tons; there were also four great galleasses and four galleys, propelled in part by oars, and 45 storeships and lesser craft. They carried among them 2400 guns, 19,000 soldiers, and 8000 sailors. The ships looked larger than their tonnage, for the Spaniards

built their ships high out of the water, making real 'castles' of the forecastle and the poop. But they were but slightly provided with ammunition, since they counted on engaging their enemy at close quarters; and most of their burthen of men, being soldiers, were of no use unless they could be employed in this kind of fighting. In the Netherlands were waiting 30,000 veterans under the Duke of Parma, the greatest captain of the age; and the business of the great Armada was simply to hold the narrow seas till these should be ferried over—a great flotilla of small boats being ready to transport them.

Meanwhile, during the spring, England, in a fever of alarm, was making preparations. Trained bands of the militia and volunteer levies were being drilled: but they could have done nothing against Parma's veterans, once these were landed. The safety of England depended wholly upon her ships. The queen's navy counted 34 vessels, three or four of them of as great tonnage as the biggest of the Spaniards, though less loftily built. Some of them bore names which tradition has continued in each age of the navy: the *Victory*, the *Dreadnought*, the *Vanguard*, the *Revenge*, the *Triumph*, the *Swiftsure*. These were the backbone of the fleet; but they were supported by a large number of merchant-ships, and craft of the type that had done pirate work in the Channel and in the West Indies. The whole fleet numbered 197 vessels. But the majority of them were tiny craft, many of them of little or no fighting value. Even the queen's ships averaged under 400 tons, and the rest averaged something like 125 tons. Their crews numbered 15,000 men against the 27,000 Spaniards, but the proportion of trained sailors was very much higher. Moreover the English ships were in proportion far more heavily gunned, and knew far better how to use their guns; also they carried greater stores of ammunition, though not nearly enough.

In the eyes of the world the superiority lay wholly upon the Spanish side; but the real superiority for naval fighting was on the English side, especially after the hard training of the last generation. The defeat of the Armada was no miracle; it was the natural result of what had gone before. 'The Englishmen,' shrewdly noted the Venetian ambassador at Madrid, 'are of a different quality from the Spaniards, bearing a name above all the West for being expert and enterprising in all maritime matters, and the finest fighters upon the sea.' The supreme command of

the English fleet had been given to Lord Howard of Effingham, a cousin of the queen. But though a man of family, chosen for that reason, Howard, unlike Medina Sidonia, knew something of the sea, and was not afraid to take responsibilities. And he had the help of the most daring and practised seamen of the age. Drake was second in command; and with him at the admiral's council sat Hawkins and Frobisher.

The bulk of the English fleet had gathered at Plymouth by May, some forty ships being left in the Straits of Dover to watch the Flanders coast. Drake was eager to sail for Spain and attack the Spaniards in their own waters, and Howard supported him. There can be no doubt that this was the right course. But the misgivings of the government, and still more the shortness of supplies (which were provided only for a month at a time), rendered this difficult. They did indeed make a dash for Corunna on July 8; if they had been a few days earlier they would have caught the Spanish fleet refitting in the harbours of the north Spanish coast. But the wind changed, and they had to run back to Plymouth. Here they lay, penned into harbour by the southerly wind which had brought the Spaniards across the Bay of Biscay, when the Armada suddenly appeared off Plymouth on July 19. It had the English at a disadvantage, but its commander did not know how to use the chance as Drake would have used it. The English fleet was left undisturbed, while it warped out of harbour during the night, tacked against the wind, and came up on the weather side of the enemy. Now began (July 20) a long running fight up the Channel, which lasted through a whole week, until on the 26th the Armada anchored off Calais. The English dared not close with the enemy, since that would give the Spaniards the chance they wanted. They could only harass them, 'pluck their feathers,' rattle their nerves. A good deal of damage was done; but no vital injury had been inflicted, and the enemy had reached his destination, the straits of Dover, and would soon be in communication with Parma.

Now came the critical fighting in the actual straits. The English fleet was now at full strength, having been joined by the Dover contingent. On the night of the 28th the English sent eight fireships drifting with wind and tide into the midst of the Spanish fleet. The Spaniards had to slip their cables, and move off in disorder. Then came, off Gravelines, the one great general action of the campaign.

The Spaniards (by their own bad seamanship) fought at a disadvantage; their fleet was in disarray; the wind threatened to blow them upon the sandbanks. For eight hours there was hard, pell-mell fighting; and the expenditure of shot and shell on the English side so far passed all experience that ammunition was running short before the end of the fight. The Armada was far from being destroyed in this hard fight. But four ships were sunk, and others taken or driven ashore useless. And in the end the pressure of the English from the windward side compelled Medina Sidonia, as the only way of escaping the shoals, to break away to the north. The English feared his return, and pursued him far up the North Sea. But return was out of the question. The great ships were badly cut about, many of them leaking. Their supplies of ammunition were nearly exhausted, for they had never anticipated fighting of this sort. And to crown all, violent gales sprung up, before which they could do nothing but run, in disorder: the only possibility was to flee back to Spain north about round Scotland and Ireland.

Legend has attributed the defeat of the Armada to the intervention of Heaven: '*Flavit Deus et dissipati sunt.*' But the great Armada was already defeated before the gales arose. It was defeated by the superior seamanship and gunnery which the English had learnt in a generation of adventure, and which prevented the Spaniards from ever getting to close quarters, or making use of the 19,000 soldiers and the multitude of small guns which they had prepared for that sort of battle. The stormy waters of the North Sea and the Atlantic completed the ruin. Nineteen ships were wrecked off the coasts of Scotland and Ireland; thirty-five more disappeared unaccounted for, some of them wrecked in a storm in the Bay, almost within sight of home. It was only a battered fragment of the great fleet that returned to Spain. On the English side not a ship was lost; and such loss of life as there was was mainly due to sickness.

The tragic ruin of the Armada, and above all the shameful futility of its achievements, meant the downfall of Spanish prestige on the sea. The colossus that bestrode the world had fallen in fragments. No longer could Spain maintain a monopoly which she was manifestly unable to defend. All the roads of the sea lay open to the adventurous: not only to the English, but to the peoples of all nations; the unpeopled regions of the New World were free for them

to settle, the rich trade of the tropics and the golden East awaited their exploitation.

But neither England nor the world yet saw how great were the results of the victory. England still feared invasion from the Netherlands, still kept her trained bands drilling. Philip II. himself had not given up hope, but laboured to recreate his broken naval power; and the war dragged on during the whole remainder of Elizabeth's reign, and, indeed, in form until 1604. Drake was for pushing home the victory by a bold attempt to conquer Spanish America, for which he proposed to raise a huge force in conjunction with the Dutch. But these counsels were too bold for the government, which limited its efforts to a variety of raiding enterprises after the old pattern, and to a rather ineffective expedition in 1589, whose aim was to stimulate revolt in Portugal. Even the Spanish ports were long left at peace, so that Philip was able to build a new fighting navy; and when Howard in 1591 led an expedition against the Azores, he had to retreat before a superior force. This was the occasion on which the 'magnificent barbarian,' Sir Richard Grenville, flatly declined to retreat, and in the *Revenge* fought fifteen Spanish men-of-war for fifteen hours, refusing to surrender.[1] The *Revenge* was the only English warship taken by the enemy in Elizabeth's reign, but the glorious spirit of its resistance was worth a thousand ships.

Many glorious deeds of war were done during the years which followed the Armada fight, but they did not seriously affect the issue. In 1595 Drake got his way, and he and Hawkins led a considerable expedition against the West Indies. But it led to no important results save the sacking of a few towns; and only deserves to be remembered because the two old sea-dogs both died of sickness during its course, and were buried in the waters which had rung with their names for so many years. That may be regarded as the close of the wonderful period of patriotic piracy. The kind of foray which had been so valuable in the days when Spain overshadowed the world was now out of date. The time had come for new and more prosaic methods—methods of construction, not of destruction. The work of the sea-dogs was done.

Though the war lingered on in name, its last great operation was the attack upon Cadiz, led by the Earl of Essex in 1596. It was not well managed. But in spite of that

[1] This is the episode described in Tennyson's ballad of *The Revenge*.

the city was seized and burnt, together with most of the shipping in its harbour; and this ignominious handling of the greatest Spanish port, to which the argosies of the Indies had annually brought their treasures, showed that the Spanish dominion of the world was a vanished nightmare. Before his death in 1598 Philip II. admitted, in instructions to his son, that sooner or later the English must be admitted to the traffic of the New World, for which they had fought so hard. The Freedom of the Seas was won; it remained for the next generation to use it.

[Corbett's *Drake and the Tudor Navy*; Froude's *English Seamen of the Sixteenth Century*; Hale's *Story of the Great Armada*; Stebbing's *Life of Raleigh*; Payne's or Beazley's selections from Elizabethan voyages.]

CHAPTER IX

THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND

§ 1. *The Problem of Ireland.*

THE sixteenth century was for England a period of glorious achievement, and for Scotland a period of national rebirth; but for Ireland it was a period of tragic miseries. The islands were in this age brought nearer to the unity which was to enable them to face a new era with confidence; but while the union of England and Wales was brought about peacefully and by constitutional means, and while between England and Scotland ancient enmity was replaced by friendship, leading towards union, the union of Ireland with England was achieved by a cruel process of conquest. This was due, as we shall see, to the influence of the embitterment produced by the Reformation and the struggle with Spain. But it left behind it a rancour and a sense of injustice which have contributed to poison the relations of the two countries ever since, and to make Ireland, in all succeeding times, the worst bewilderment and the most shameful failure with which British statesmanship has had to deal.

We have seen[1] that, unhappily for Ireland, the Norman conquest of the island was never completed, and that during the later Middle Ages the authority of the English king almost wholly broke down, so that only an *enclave* round Dublin, known as the Pale, observed English law; and this region alone was represented in the Irish Parliament. We have also seen that Henry VII. and (during the early part of his reign) Henry VIII. had contented themselves with trying to maintain their authority within the Pale, and to prevent it from falling under the control of the powerful Earls of Kildare, whose lands lay just outside.[2]

Even within the Pale there was much misery, because law and order were ill maintained; like the districts of Scotland which lay on the borders of the wild Highlands, the Pale was subject to frequent raids from the clans out-

[1] See above, pp. 56, 122, 188.

[2] For all that follows, see the map, Atlas, Plate 42 (*a*).

side, and many landowners found it necessary to pay 'black rents' to various chieftains, as an insurance against being raided. Outside the Pale there was no law or order at all, except what individual chieftains were able to enforce within the limits of their clans. For the greater part of Ireland was in much the same condition as the Highlands of Scotland in the same period—it was divided into clans which in practice recognised no authority save that of their own chiefs, acknowledged no law save their tribal customs, and were unceasingly engaged in war with one another, often of the most bloody and treacherous kind. But there was this difference between Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, that while the Highland chieftains were in a real degree subject to the King of Scotland, and took part in Scotland's national life, the Irish clans in the early sixteenth century, though they nominally recognised the suzerainty of the English king as Lord of Ireland, were in reality quite unaffected by it. Some even among the great Norman barons, such as the Burkes (de Burghs) in Galway, had in practice assimilated themselves to their surroundings during the long centuries of anarchy, and, though originally conquering rulers, were now to all intents and purposes tribal chiefs. This wild tribal Ireland carried on some trade with the Continent as well as with England. But its contact with the outer world was very slight. It was, in fact, in an earlier stage of civilisation than the rest of Western Europe. Moreover the Church, whose noble work had been the glory of early Ireland, had fallen into terrible disorganisation. From all quarters this tale is told—not only Englishmen, whose testimony might be suspected, but Spaniards wrecked from the Armada or sent to take part in invasions, and Jesuit missionaries despatched to rouse the Irish against heresy, unite in saying that churches had fallen into ruin, that cathedrals were turned into fortresses, that bishops and abbots were as turbulent as the tribal chiefs.

Among these warring tribes there was little or no sense of national feeling; no loyalty wider than that of the clan. In old days, before the Norman invasions, there had been kings of all Ireland; and though they were ill obeyed, they might in time have brought order. But the Norman invasions had swept them away, and replaced them by the nominal authority of the English Crown. If Ireland was to enjoy peace and the chance of growth in civilisation, it could only be by the repression of tribal anarchy; only so could

Ireland in any real sense become a nation. And the only power which could possibly undertake this task, as things were, was the English Crown. But if it was to be successful, it would have to undertake the task sympathetically; it would have to respect Irish laws and usages in so far as they were not harmful; it would have to rule Ireland in Ireland's interests, not in its own. The Tudor sovereigns undertook the task of taming the anarchy and reorganising the country. Unhappily the circumstances under which they undertook the task, and the motives by which they were almost necessarily influenced, were such as to forbid the observance of these conditions.

In the eyes of the English, who enjoyed settled order and a fair degree of prosperity, the native Irish seemed to be in a state of mere barbarism, not very different from that of the Red Indians. The English saw in Ireland a country given over to miserable and unceasing feuds, murders and treacheries; a country of forests and wastes and marshes, broken only by patches of the rudest cultivation; a country whose lower classes went about like savages, half naked, and were scarcely able to provide themselves with roofs to cover their heads; and indeed the constant anarchy had reduced large parts of Ireland to a condition that seemed to justify this picture. Englishmen did not realise that, in spite of the misery of large parts of it, Ireland was a land which had produced saints and poets and scholars, and was still producing them; and that, once they had escaped from the anarchy which caused their wretchedness, the Irish people were as capable as any other people in Europe of enjoying and enriching a fully civilised life. To most Englishmen who had dealings with this unhappy country, it appeared that there was nothing in the life and customs of the native Irish that was worth preserving; the only hope seemed to be that the Irish should be civilised by force, after the English pattern; and when they found that this process was resented and resisted, and that Irish customs still persisted, many Englishmen gradually drifted into the abominable view that the Irish were irreclaimable savages, who must be wiped out like the savages of the New World, and replaced by Englishmen. They came the more readily to this horrible opinion because in actual fact Ireland constituted a terrible danger to England during the crisis of the struggle with Spain.

Of all the Irish customs those which the English least understood were the clan system, and the system of land-

tenure upon which it rested; for these systems were wholly unlike anything that England had known since long before the Norman Conquest. According to Irish usage the lands of the clan were the property of the clan; the chief (who was in a vague way elected, though always from the same family) was only the chief guardian of the clan's rights, and had only a life-interest in the clan's lands. He was thus quite unlike a great feudal landowner with his vassals and tenantry; though the English insisted upon treating him as such. So far as they understood the Irish system, the English thought it a thoroughly bad one, which could never lead to a settled and systematic development of the resources of the land; and they held that the first step towards better things must be to do away with the clan system, and to turn the chiefs into landowners after the English pattern. They were right in seeing the dangerous features of the clan system on its political side, and in wishing to bring all the clans under the reign of law. But to uproot a people's ideas as to its rights in the soil was another matter. In a purely agricultural and pastoral country such as Ireland, land-rights are all-important; and it is on the question of the land, in one form or another, that all the long bitterness has mainly turned, from Henry VIII.'s time to our own.

§ 2. *The First Attempts to Solve the Irish Problem.*

It was Henry VIII.'s breach with Rome which first made the king turn his attention seriously to the necessity of bringing Ireland into an orderly state. For he found that Charles V. was tempted to stir up trouble among the Irish chiefs, and that the Pope, who claimed that Ireland belonged to the papal see, and had been conferred on Henry II. by papal bull, was inclined to use these claims against a heretic king. But there was, at this date, little or no papal enthusiasm in Ireland. Henry's repudiation of the papal authority was quite calmly accepted by most of the chieftains. Some Jesuits, whom the Pope despatched in 1541 to stir up religious feeling in Ireland, had to return disconsolate, with nothing achieved.

In answer to the papal claim, Henry in 1541 assumed the title of King of Ireland, under an Act of the Irish Parliament—the earlier title had been only Lord of Ireland. Before that date the powerful Fitzgeralds of Kildare, who had long dominated the Pale, had broken into rebellion:

Henry crushed the rising with vigour, and executed the Earl of Kildare and his five uncles. This branch of the Fitzgeralds henceforward gave little trouble. Henry then sent across a commission of inquiry under Sir Anthony St. Leger, to work out a scheme for the better government of Ireland. The scheme was not without elements of statesmanship. The chieftains of the clans nearest to the Pale were to be given grants of their (or their clans') lands on English tenure, subject to the condition that they should do their best to make their tenants (or clansmen) speak English, that they should give up levying blackmail and maintaining armed bands of retainers, and that they should recognise and use the English courts. On this basis a large part of Leinster was reorganised, and brought under the same system of government as the Pale. As for the more distant and powerful chiefs, like the heads of the great O'Neill and O'Donnell clans in Ulster, or of the O'Briens in Clare, they could not be so directly dealt with. But they were persuaded when possible to hold their lands from the Crown, and to attend Parliament. Some of them were willing to fall in with these proposals, notably Con O'Neill of Tyrone; and on him and some other great chiefs Henry conferred earldoms. Moreover the plunder of the Irish monasteries was largely distributed among the chiefs, who made little difficulty about accepting it, or about recognising Henry as head of the Church. The clan system was being weakened. So far as it went, the work of Henry VIII. was successful, and the authority of the Crown in Ireland stood higher than it had ever done before.

But the habits of tribal independence and of turbulence were not to be so easily exorcised; nor could the land rights of the clansmen, and their claim to choose their chiefs, be calmly disregarded without serious trouble. Early in the reign of Edward VI. there was a sudden rising of the O'Conors and the O'Mores, who occupied an area corresponding to the modern King's County and Queen's County. The rebellion was sternly suppressed; the country of these clans was laid waste; and it was decided to carry out an entirely new settlement of the confiscated lands, in freeholds and leases after the English fashion. This was the first attempt at what came to be known as a 'plantation,' though as yet no distinction was made between English and Irish occupiers. It was carried out by Philip and Mary, whose memory is preserved in the names of King's County and Queen's County, with their capitals of Philips-

town and Maryborough. The plantation took root, but not without much trouble. The grantees found that they had to defend themselves against the old occupants ; all through the rest of the century there was wild business in this region, and great loss of life.

More serious was the trouble in Ulster, which resulted from Henry VIII.'s attempt to turn the head of the clan O'Neill into a territorial magnate of the English pattern. The clan denied the right of their chief to dispose of the clan lands as a family estate. They denied the right of the king to decide, by a patent, what should be the order of succession to the chiefdom. Moreover the eldest son of the first Earl of Tyrone, who had been designated as his heir in the patent, was illegitimate. His younger but legitimate brother, Shane O'Neill, had been a boy when the patent was issued ; when he grew to manhood he had a claim which brought all the clansmen round him : he was standing not only for his personal rights, but for the ancient customs of the clan, and their rights over the clan lands. Soon after Henry VIII.'s death civil war broke out among the O'Neills, and Shane, a man of immense vigour, and capable of the most brutal cruelty, not only made himself leader of the clan, but proceeded to assert his authority over surrounding clans, once subject to the O'Neills. We cannot follow the wild story of his raids and wars, and especially of his alternate alliance and enmity with the other great Ulster clan, the O'Donnells of Donegal, and with the Highland M'Donnells who had recently made a settlement in Antrim. His power had reached a dangerous height, and Ulster was all aflame, when Elizabeth came to the throne. If the authority of the Crown was to mean anything, Shane must be brought to obedience ; especially as he was known to be intriguing with the Spaniards. An ineffective war raged at intervals from 1560 to 1567, when Shane, defeated by the O'Donnells, took refuge with the M'Donnells in Antrim, and was by them hacked to pieces in a drunken brawl. The English forces engaged in this strife were never strong enough to reach a clear decision ; largely because Elizabeth never had money enough to equip an adequate army. For the time Ulster was quiet ; the O'Neills and the O'Donnells were exhausted, and there was an uneasy peace. But Ulster, the wildest and fiercest region of Ireland, was by no means subdued.

Meanwhile yet graver trouble had broken out in the south. It was a sign of the beginning of national oppo-

sition in Ireland that, though there was no active co-operation between these two risings, there was communication between the leaders. The Ulster trouble arose from a tribal revolt of a kind that was to be expected. But in the Munster troubles a new and more perturbing element appeared: the element of religion.

§ 3. *Religious Conflict and the Munster Risings.*

We have seen that in Henry VIII.'s time no serious difficulty had been caused by the denial of papal supremacy, and that the Pope's first attempt to raise the banner of resistance, in 1541, had been a failure. But Henry VIII.'s changes had been political, not doctrinal; they had involved practically no change in the order of service, which was still said in Latin. The changes made under Edward VI. and Elizabeth were quite another matter. The new faith might have had a chance of winning acceptance in Ireland if it had been introduced by persuasion, and in a form intelligible to the Irish; for the Irish people are not by nature lovers of authority, despite their long fidelity to the most authoritarian of religions, and they had in the past shown no great zeal for Rome. But the English government made the incredible blunder of insisting not only that the new order of service should be everywhere introduced, but that it should be read in English, which was unintelligible to nine out of ten Irishmen. The new doctrines thus appeared as an unmeaning set of formulæ, forcibly imposed by a power which was already attacking the time-honoured customs of the clans and the traditional modes of holding land. Resistance to Protestantism naturally came to be identified with patriotism; exactly the opposite to what had happened in England and Scotland.

In 1560 Pope Pius IV., seeing that Elizabeth (whatever she might pretend) was in fact an open heretic, determined to use Ireland as a stepping-stone for the recovery of England. Thus Irish opposition came to be regarded by Englishmen as imperilling the very existence of English freedom, at a time when it was threatened on all hands. The introduction into Irish politics of these new motives produced an embitterment which could only lead to the most horrible consequences.

The Pope's agents in this work were mainly Jesuit missionaries, of whom a steady stream was poured into Ireland from training-schools at Louvain, Douai and

Salamanca throughout the whole of Elizabeth's reign. The first of these was a Limerick man, David Wolfe, who landed at Cork in 1561. His instructions were not only to work for the revival of the Catholic faith, but to form a league of Irish chiefs for its defence. The first task came first, for hitherto the Irish chiefs had shown a remarkable indifference to the Catholic faith. But recent events had prepared the soil for the sowers. It might have been expected that Wolfe would have gone straight for Shane O'Neill, then in open revolt. But he regarded Shane as a 'cruel and impious heretic'; he did not go near Ulster, but at first devoted himself to Munster, where his and his colleagues' preaching produced the beginnings of a real religious revival, combined with and strengthened by a passionate anti-English feeling. The more Jesuits came to Ireland, the more this feeling grew, spreading from Munster to the rest of Ireland, and conquering even the Pale. The English did their best to catch the Jesuits, but their hold over great parts of the country was so slight that they had small success.

In Munster the two most formidable powers were the great Anglo-Norman families of the Butlers, Earls of Ormond (corresponding to Tipperary), and the Fitzgeralds or Geraldines, Earls of Desmond (the greater part of County Cork). Of these the Butlers were always the most steadily loyal to the English connexion. From 1560 a private war had been raging (as often before) between these houses. Elizabeth insisted that the question at issue must be decided by government. The award of the Lord Deputy went in favour of Ormond, and as Desmond showed signs of resisting, and was suspected of complicity with Shane O'Neill, he was arrested (1567) and sent to London, with a charge of treason hanging over his head. In 1568 Desmond agreed to surrender his lands to the queen, of course on the assumption that he would receive them again and be allowed to return. But he was still detained, and some of the Devon adventurers, with the instincts of the pirate, began to besiege the queen with suggestions that the lands should be granted to them, and undertook to conquer them by their own resources. At the same time the Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney—the ablest of Elizabeth's representatives in Ireland—was urgent that a President should be appointed to administer Munster, and to enforce English law throughout its limits. Undoubtedly there was need for the enforcement of law; but the suggestion that it should be associated

with a forcible occupation of land gave it a different colour, especially when some of the Devon adventurers, having purchased obsolete titles, appeared with bodies of retainers to make their claims good by force.

Under these circumstances a formidable revolt broke out in Munster in 1569, spreading from Kerry to Kilkenny. Its leader was James Fitzmaurice, a cousin of the Earl of Desmond, in whose absence he was able to wield all the influence of the Geraldines. He was one of the earliest and most devoted adherents of Wolfe. He was in connexion with Spain and hoped for Spanish aid. He was inspired at once by religious zeal and by hatred of England. Half the rest of Ireland was uneasy and ready for revolt; even in the Pale there was widespread discontent. The queen could spare no sufficient supplies of money, and only a force of some two thousand English troops was available. It seemed a fight of life and death for England; and under these circumstances the struggle, which lasted for four dreary and hideous years, assumed a character of ferocity on both sides uglier than was to be found in any of the other wars of that fierce age. No quarter was given. It was a war of extermination on both sides. The country was laid waste. The English garrisons, often unpaid, had to live by plunder. They hated the work they had to do, they hated the miserable people they had to pursue, and they were repaid by a hatred as intense. In the end (1573) Fitzmaurice had to be pardoned, Desmond had to be allowed to return, and the attempt to enforce English law had to be abandoned. Large parts of Munster had been desolated, but nothing else had been achieved. Certainly the Catholic and anti-English movement had not been crushed: the English officers reported that a foreign invasion would inevitably be followed by a general insurrection.

In face of such a situation it was obvious that if the English power was to be maintained, and Ireland was not to become a base for the overthrow of English freedom, some stronger measures must be taken. Lord Deputy Sidney got his way at last, and English presidents, supported by small forces, were appointed to govern Munster and Connaught. The value of the new officers was shown in 1577, when a revolt of the Burkes of Connaught was promptly and mercilessly crushed: 'I marched into their country,' the president reported, 'with determination to consume them with fire and sword, sparing neither old nor young.'

But this was not a happy mode of recommending English law and justice; and it was an ominous thing that Connaught, hitherto relatively undisturbed, should also be in revolt. Moreover in Ulster the situation was far from reassuring: the O'Neills and the O'Donnells were making friends, and were not to be trusted; the Earl of Essex, Governor of Ulster, had raised a hornets' nest by trying to make an English colony in Antrim, and only maintained a semblance of English authority with difficulty.

In 1579 the danger that might result from a foreign invasion was put to the test. James Fitzmaurice had gone abroad in 1575, to seek for aid in every quarter. He returned in June 1579, at the head of a motley force of Spaniards, Italians, Portuguese, Irish and English, and landed with them in Kerry: they had the Pope's blessing, and the unofficial backing of Philip II., who promised to send reinforcements later. Soon the Earl of Desmond rose in revolt. The presidents of Connaught and Munster at first prevented the revolt from spreading, and during the winter, with Ormond's help, inflicted the most awful vengeance upon the rebellious districts, 'consuming with fire all habitations,' says the English commander, 'and executing the people wherever we found them.' The small foreign force was captured and put to the sword. Desmond was almost overwhelmed, when (Aug. 1580) a revolt broke out among the Irish of the Pale, under Lord Baltinglas, who succeeded in inflicting a severe defeat upon the new Lord Deputy himself. Almost at this moment a small Spanish force, eluding the English ships in the Channel, reached Kerry and entrenched themselves at Smerwick. They could do nothing, because the country in front of them was a desert. But for a moment it looked as if the English power would collapse. Vigorous action, and fighting yet more pitiless than that which had gone before, removed the danger. The Spaniards, beset by sea and land, were forced to surrender at discretion, and all put to the sword. The leaders of the risings were one by one taken and executed. The war lingered on for another two years, filled rather with the hunting down of the unhappy rebels than with actual fighting. By 1584 peace was restored: 'they made a desert, and called it peace.' In 1582 it was estimated that thirty thousand souls had perished in six months, mainly of starvation.

One advantage of this wholesale destruction, from the English point of view, was that it left the field clear for an

English colony on some of the most fertile soil in Ireland. Grants of land were made to various 'undertakers,' on condition that they brought in English tenants of various grades and settled them on the land, and that they did not alienate their land to Irishmen. Some of the most distinguished men of the age took up grants, Sir Walter Raleigh and Edmund Spenser among them. But few of the gentry took the business seriously. Those who did found little solace for their exile among a 'savage nation,' as Spenser called the Irish in his *State of Ireland*. Ere long the dispossessed Irish or their children were drifting back, and in due time Munster was as Irish as it had ever been, though the old land system and the old clan rule had gone. Order, at any rate, was more or less established in this region: there were few left to disturb it.

§ 4. *The Irish National Rising under Tyrone.*

For more than ten years after the second Munster rising Ireland enjoyed an interval of broken peace. No doubt the destruction of the Armada, which for the time removed all hope of help from Spain, partly accounted for this; though the firm and stern rule of Sir John Perrot did much. But after the wreck of his hopes at sea in 1588, Philip II. trusted more to Ireland than to any other factor in his struggle against England. His emissaries, aided by the Jesuit missionaries, were constantly at work. In the 'nineties he began to have hopes from Ulster. Here the old feud which had divided the O'Neills of Tyrone had been brought to an end. Hugh O'Neill, grandson and heir of the chief upon whom Henry VIII. had conferred the title of Earl of Tyrone, had been brought over by the English and supported by them in Armagh, as a check upon Shane O'Neill's successor in the chiefship, Turlough. Hugh, Earl of Tyrone, played the part of a loyal friend to England for many long years, and actually helped to put down the Munster rebellion. But he made friends with his rival Turlough, was accepted as his 'Tanist,' or successor-designate, and in 1593 succeeded to the chiefship of the whole O'Neill tribe. He also struck up a close friendship with Hugh Roe O'Donnell, who in 1591 had become chief of the O'Donnell clan, the ancient rival of the O'Neills; and Hugh Roe was an eager Catholic and anti-English man. Perhaps it was Hugh Roe's influence which determined Tyrone to break with the English, perhaps the fear that the English would repeat in Ulster

the plantation scheme they had carried out in Munster—a fear not without justification; anyway the two great chiefs of the north got into secret relations with Philip II.; and meanwhile were actively extending their influence over the neighbouring clans. In 1595 they broke the peace, Tyrone ravaging Louth while O'Donnell invaded Connaught. A peace was made in 1596, but there was a new outbreak in 1597, ended by a truce which expired in 1598.

In August 1598, renewing the war, Tyrone inflicted on the English, at the Yellow Ford, the worst defeat they had yet endured in Ireland. At the same time a rising broke out in Connaught; the O'Mores and O'Conors rose to redress their ancient grievances in Leinster; and a force led by Tyrone into Munster drove the settlers in the new plantation to take refuge in the towns. For the first time the English had to deal with an almost universal national revolt. On all hands and in all the provinces, chiefs who had accepted the English system were replaced by rivals. If Philip II. could at this moment have landed a substantial force in Ireland, the country might have been lost to England. But no Spanish army appeared.

To deal with this grave menace Elizabeth sent her domineering young favourite, the Earl of Essex, with the highest powers yet entrusted to a viceroy, and at the head of the biggest English army yet seen in Ireland—16,000 foot and 1300 horse. Essex, who may have been playing some deep game of his own, did nothing effectual, and offered to Tyrone, who was glad to accept them, terms so favourable that they were repudiated by the government. The favourite lost for ever the friendship of the queen (1599): two years later he was executed for an attempt to raise a rebellion in England.

The war was renewed in 1600, and again flamed out in all parts of the country. But by hard fighting Essex's successor, Lord Mountjoy, had by 1601 broken the back of the rebellion, when the news came that a large force of Spaniards, 5000 troops with siege-guns, had been landed at Kinsale by a fleet of thirty-three ships. The long expected Spanish aid had come; but it had come too late. Though the revolt flickered up again, and Tyrone and O'Donnell marched to Munster to join forces with the invaders, it was no longer possible to restore the situation. The Spaniards were blockaded from the sea by an English squadron, which successfully beat off a Spanish fleet sent to their relief; on land they were beset by Mountjoy, whom Tyrone

attacked with results disastrous to himself, losing 2000 men, while the English lost only one man. In January 1602, the Spaniards capitulated; and although the war lingered on for another year, from that moment the complete failure of the last and most serious attempt to prevent the English conquest of Ireland was assured. Tyrone submitted just after Elizabeth died. The great queen's reign had begun with the coming of the Jesuit missionaries to an indifferent, turbulent, tribal Ireland. It ended with Ireland Catholic but conquered; its tribal system overthrown, and large areas of its land in the hands of English settlers. To Elizabeth's successor was left the problem of settlement.

The story which has been outlined in this chapter is one of the most forbidding and depressing episodes in the whole of our long history. It left manifold seeds of ill, from which the whole British Commonwealth still suffers. It taught, or ought to have taught, the lesson that mere brute force is never by itself a remedy, and that the attempt to destroy the character and institutions of a people brings its own punishment, even after many days.

Yet in justice to the men of this great age, who worked such blended good and ill, let it be remembered that the enforcement of order in Ireland by the curbing of tribal anarchy was in itself not only a legitimate aim, but a duty imposed upon the English by the force of events. It was done in the wrong way, without sympathy or understanding, and without that firmness and strength which are necessary when such work has to be done. For the lack of strength the poverty rather than the parsimony of Elizabeth was mainly to blame: in view of the state of England during the early years of her reign she dared not impose heavy taxation, and the subjugation of Ireland was a costly business —in the last four years of her reign Ireland cost 30 *per cent.* more than the total revenues of these years. For the lack of sympathy and understanding the blame is deeper. But it is part of the explanation, if it is no excuse, for the barbarity with which the conquest was effected, that all the acrimony of religious difference was enlisted on both sides; that the age was one of ferocity in war; and that the Englishmen who fought in Munster and in Ulster, mere handfuls of men, ill-supported and often ill-led, felt that they were fighting not merely for dominion, but also and mainly for the very existence of their own country, which was threatened by the looming terror of an attack

from the mighty power of Spain, and which could be most dangerously struck at through Ireland. The fighting in Ireland may perhaps have meant the freedom of England, and of all that English freedom has meant for the world: but it left a legacy of evil memories and of smouldering hates.

[Richey, *Short History of the Irish People*; Bagwell, *Ireland under the Tudors* (3 vols.); R. Dunlop's chapter in the Cambridge Modern History, vol. iii.]

CHAPTER X

THE AGE OF ELIZABETH

(A.D. 1558-1603)

§ 1. *Literary Activity.*

THE supreme glory of the Elizabethan age is its poetic literature; and great as were the services of the statesmen and the sailors of this age to the building of the future Commonwealth, the services of the poets were not less. For they built the first great chamber in that treasure-house of imagination and thought which is the noblest heritage of the peoples of the islands, and of their descendants, and of all who share with them the traditions of the Commonwealth. It is not the least of the ties which link together the English-speaking peoples, that they speak 'the tongue which Shakespeare spoke': a tongue now made by the achievement of the poets immeasurably richer and more expressive than it had ever been before.

There had been no great English poet since Chaucer, two centuries before; and, though there were stray harbingers of the coming splendour from the time of Henry VIII. onwards, it was not until the middle of Elizabeth's reign that the full glory was displayed. From about 1579 onwards it went on, growing rich in variety, reaching perhaps its highest point at about the close of the reign, but continuing with a scarcely diminished lustre throughout the next reign: suddenly England had become a 'nest of singing birds.' And if we ask why so astonishing an efflorescence should have come so suddenly, it is only possible to say that the great ages of literature are apt to come when men's minds are challenged by high issues, when their imaginations are stimulated by the unfolding of new vistas of experience, and when their hearts are set singing by the pride of life, and by a great confidence in the worth of what they and their fellows are set to do. There never was a time or a country, unless it be the Athens of Pericles, when these motives of creative intelligence were more powerful than in Elizabeth's England, the

England of the Reformation, of a suddenly revealed new world, of gallant adventures, and of proud challenge to an overwhelming and overbearing foe. It is not wonderful that the generation which followed the Armada fight should have produced some of the greatest poetic literature in the world's history.

This is not the place for an enumeration of the poets or an analysis of their works. The age of Shakespeare, Spenser, Marlowe, Chapman, Daniel, Drayton, Sidney, Raleigh and Jonson would have been a wonderful age if its greatest name had never been known; all of these were born in the first years of Elizabeth, or a few years earlier. But we may well note some of the outstanding features of this literature as a whole, because of the light which it sheds upon the spirit of a great age.

It was in the first place imbued with a splendid and confident national spirit—a profound love for England and belief in her destiny:—'this precious stone, set in a silver sea,' which 'never did, nor never shall, lie at the proud foot of a conqueror but when it first did help to wound itself.' This pride of patriotism was often as intolerant in expression as the sea rovers and the men of the Irish plantations were intolerant in action: it had the brutality of youth.

But in spite of the ardour of their patriotism, which burst forth wherever it could find a vent, the poets were curiously little concerned about politics and problems of government: Shakespeare could write a play about King John without mentioning Magna Carta. It may be said that this was because politics are not the stuff out of which poetry can be made; but the poetry of the revolutionary age, of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron, shows that there is nothing in this. The Elizabethan poets were not interested in institutions. They were content to leave government to the queen and her councillors, and they felt for the Crown a fervid loyalty, as the focus and guardian of English patriotism. They were all aristocratic in sentiment; in the plays of Shakespeare, who was himself of humble station, and wrote for the crowd in the pit, there is nothing but contempt for the 'mob' and the 'people,' regarded as a political factor. And no doubt in this respect the poets echoed, as poets nearly always do, the general sentiment of their age; though there were growing elements in the English nation which, as we shall see, were beginning to be deeply concerned about the problems of government.

Nor did the poets show much interest in the great religious problems of the age, though sometimes they poked fun at precisians and Puritans, as Shakespeare did at Malvolio. That was doubtless a natural attitude for a free-living set of Bohemians and haunters of taverns and playhouses: it is to the prose-writers and the pamphleteers that we must turn for an expression of the more earnest and even bitter temper that was growing in some circles, especially in the second half of the reign. To the poets the religious question was only one form of England's assertion of her national personality. But that, no doubt, was the common attitude of ordinary men.

But, indeed, the value and beauty of this literature resides not in its discussion or reflection of national problems, but in its concern with the aspirations and passions of the individual life, with love and hate, passion and revenge, tragedy and humour. If Shakespeare puts kings and great personages in the forefront of his stage, he is concerned, not with their statecraft, but with their personalities and their struggle with destiny. That is true even of his historical plays, which are not histories at all in the strict sense, because they do not deal with the fortunes of peoples, but only with the personal drama of great actors on the human stage. And it is just because of this concern with the universal emotions and aspirations of individual men that the greatest of these poets are able to make a universal appeal.

Just as they cared most of all to deal with the manifold expressions of human individuality, so in their own work the Elizabethans admitted no restraint upon the expression of their own individuality. While elsewhere, notably in France, men were striving to observe the strict rules of classical composition, the Elizabethans experimented freely in all directions, refusing to be bound by any rules. The school which wanted to make rules for English poetry was quickly laughed out of court; and from that day onward English literature has been, of all literatures, the most individual, the most varied, the most free from the compulsion of rules, the most open to every influence that blew in from other lands. And here, among the poets, we may observe the same feature that we have already noted among the seamen, and might equally note elsewhere. It was individual enterprise, freedom of individual initiative, that was building the greatness of England.

In the realm of prose the achievement of the age was

less than in poetry; yet the prose writers, such as Hooker and Bacon, and even the writers of State papers, having found the language hodden grey, were turning it into cloth of gold—a little too stiff and gorgeous for ordinary wear, but the capacity of the loom was wonderfully expanded, and later generations could change the texture to suit their needs. One of the most striking features of the period was the large amount of historical writing which it produced. The motive of this work was patriotic pride, as it was of Shakespeare's historical plays. But Holinshed, Stow and Camden displayed great industry and considerable learning. Englishmen were beginning to study their own past. Soon they found in it a remarkable repertory of hints and precedents for the expansion of their political liberties. In the seventeenth century the parliamentary leaders were to make great use of historical learning for political purposes. This tendency had already begun to appear in the Elizabethan period, when the parliamentary conflict really took its rise. 'We have a pedigree, and ensigns armorial,' said Burke two centuries later, speaking of English liberty; and it was in the Elizabethan period that men, for very pride of country, began to work out the pedigree, and to burnish the shield, of their 'ancient inherited liberties.'

§ 2. *Social Conditions.*

What was the social system of the land which could arouse such an ardour of patriotism in its sons, which was achieving so many gallant deeds, pouring forth so much splendid poetry, and preparing itself confidently to play a yet greater part upon a yet greater stage?

In the first place, it was a profoundly aristocratic society: no one can read Shakespeare without feeling that. At the head of it was a small group of great magnates, owners of wide lands; many of them had been enriched by the plunder of the monasteries. They had their country mansions, which they were rebuilding in a very attractive new style of architecture; they had also their big London houses, for they spent much time at the court, and were indeed the only class which had a common centre and yet came from and could speak for all parts of the country. But they were very different from the older baronage. Almost the whole of Elizabeth's peers had been created by Henry VIII. or his successors; they owed their existence to the Crown, and were neither tempted to aim at local independence,

like the Norman baronage, nor to rival and browbeat the Crown, like the baronage of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They played a very important part in the government of the country, filling the House of Lords, always having some of the chief places at the queen's council-board, and acting as lords-lieutenant for the queen in their counties. Aristocratic sentiment demanded that from among them should always be drawn the formal leaders of any great national enterprise: thus the Earl of Leicester was sent to lead the army in the Netherlands; Lord Howard of Effingham must captain the navy, over the heads of Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher; and the Earl of Essex must take command of the army of Ireland. They lived in much splendour, and in an age devoted to pageantry spent much of their wealth on display: witness, for example, Leicester's gorgeous *fête* which Scott has described in *Kenilworth*. It was they who maintained the companies of actors who produced the innumerable dramas of the period: but for their patronage the players would have stood in danger of the pillory as strolling vagabonds.

Next to them in dignity came the country squires: a very large class, dwelling in thousands of manor houses scattered over every part of England: landowners, living among their tenantry, and spending great part of their time in sports, in some of which their humbler neighbours and tenants could join. The country gentry had an immensely important part to play in the economy of Tudor England. From among them were drawn the Justices of the Peace, the unpaid men-of-all-work of the Tudor monarchy. It was their duty not only to maintain public order, try minor offences, and arrest and keep for trial by the king's travelling judges persons charged with major offences, but also to carry out a multitude of administrative duties, and generally to act as the local agents of the Privy Council. They looked to the main roads; they licensed inns; they fined religious recusants; they saw to the proper apprenticing of young people; to a large extent they fixed prices and wages; they had to deal with rogues and vagabonds, and to supervise the measures for the administration of poor relief, a function which became very important in the later years of the reign. Without their work the whole system of government must have broken down; and theirs is largely the credit (under the direction of the Privy Council) for the good order which on the whole marked this period throughout England. To

train themselves for these varied functions the sons of the landed gentry often went up to London, to undergo at the Temple a period of training in the laws of the land. Here was a class widely experienced in administrative work, and yet not ignorant of the science and practice of the laws of England. Such men filled the benches of the House of Commons. Their younger sons became clergymen, barristers, soldiers, sailors, and often even took to trade—especially to the higher branches of the wool trade. Later they led parties of emigrants from among their fathers' tenantry to the New World, or to the Irish plantations. It was this class which provided most of the leaders of seafaring expeditions and other adventures. This class, too, was the most politically active in the community, and for that reason it naturally took the lead in public affairs during the next century.

Below them came the yeomanry, working farmers tilling their own land—still a very numerous class in England; and with them may be linked the men who worked farms rented from the magnates or the squires. This class has often been described as the backbone of England. It was solid, conservative, and fairly prosperous. It had its due function in the life of the community: the management of village affairs, the care of the local roads, the detailed administration of poor relief were commonly in the hands of men of this class. The substantial yeoman, indeed, was often little below the smaller squire; the humbler members of this class shaded gradually into the peasantry, very many of whom had their own plots of land, though many were landless, living by hiring out their labour.

The classes whom we have enumerated under the name of the peasantry formed, of course, the great majority of the population. They were practically all illiterate; so, indeed, were a large proportion of the yeomanry, everywhere save in the more advanced districts of the south-east. It follows that the great bulk of these classes could have no effective knowledge of, or interest in, national affairs. Communications were slow and bad. There were no newspapers, and no public meetings. Except the gentry, few ever left their native villages; and it was only when news percolated downwards from the gentry (and little enough reached even them), or when ideas were promulgated by the pulpit, that even the vaguest notions about political questions could reach the mass of the people. When writers about this and the next age speak of 'the nation' as thinking this or

resolving on that, the extremely limited knowledge of public affairs possessed by the great bulk of 'the nation' must not be forgotten. 'The nation,' in fact, as an active political body, meant the gentry, some of the yeomanry, and the more lively but as yet very small population of the towns: only the biggest events made any impression upon the rest.

Although the classes of rural English society (which formed at least five-sixths of the nation) were thus clearly marked, and distinctions between them were universally accepted and respected, they were classes, and not castes; that is to say, they were not rigid; men could, and constantly did, rise or fall out of the class into which they were born, and each class shaded off insensibly into its neighbours. That was one of the marked distinctions between England and other European nations. Even the nobility was not a caste; not only were new families frequently ennobled—the greater part of the nobility, indeed, was of quite recent creation—but the sons of a noble did not inherit his nobility, but became commoners. And, at the other end of the scale, England was the one country of the West in which serfdom had practically disappeared: no man was tied for life to labour on the soil of a lord. The English were a nation of free men; and, as we have seen, a very large number of them had a share in the business of managing common affairs—the affairs of the village or the county, if not those of the country as a whole. In a real sense, therefore, England was a free and self-governing country; the only one, except Switzerland, in the world.

More or less apart from the hierarchy of rural society stood the society of the towns, engaged in trade or in industry. There were some two hundred little boroughs in England, most of them little more than villages; but they had their own system of government, usually under a town council of the leading burghers, who commonly sat for life and filled up vacancies as they occurred in their own number. This was not a democratic system; but it meant that a large number of people were engaged in managing common affairs, and in many boroughs the whole body of freemen had substantial powers, electing the Mayor and sometimes other officers. Most of the small boroughs, being merely market-towns serving the needs of the surrounding countryside, were very closely connected with rural life, and naturally much under the influence of the neighbouring gentry. But there were a few seaports which

were beginning to prosper through the growth of foreign trade, and a few inland centres of manufacturing activity, wherein there were substantial merchants more independent of the gentry. Such were Bristol and Norwich, Southampton and Hull. But London was the only big centre which had any vigorous independent life of its own. It was the centre of all the most important trade, and its rich merchants, its corporation, its powerful and wealthy city companies, constituted a factor of very great importance in the life of the nation. In London, at any rate, political knowledge was considerable; even the apprentices had their political opinions.

§ 3. *Economic Changes.*

A very considerable change had been coming over the social condition of England during the sixteenth century, under the pressure of big economic movements, and the effects of these movements were already clearly apparent in Elizabeth's reign.

In the first place the mediæval system of land-cultivation in village communities was beginning to break down —only beginning, for the process was not completed for more than two centuries. The chief cause of this was the enclosure movement, and the devotion of large areas of land to sheep-pasture instead of corn-growing. We have already seen [1] something of the trouble which this had given in the middle of the century, and how it had been accentuated by the suppression of the monasteries, and the sometimes high-handed and unsympathetic policy of the new owners of monastic lands. This change threw many labourers out of work, and led to a great deal of unrest, disorder and vagabondage. It puzzled government, from Henry VIII.'s time onwards, to know how to deal with this. At first mere severity was tried: and under Edward VI. very cruel measures were taken—the wandering man without work was made practically liable to slavery. Enclosures were still going on in Elizabeth's reign, but the problem was becoming much less difficult. This was partly because the growth of industry found employment for a good deal of surplus labour, partly because many of the idle found an outlet in overseas adventures. It was to provide for such men that Sir Humphrey Gilbert and others advocated the foundation of colonies; and indeed it is probably true that the unsettlement of the old order, and the existence in

[1] See above, pp. 217, 258, 264.

England of a large number of men uprooted from their old modes of life, formed one of the reasons why England became a great colonising country. If every man in England had had land of his own, and a secure livelihood, few would have wanted to seek homes in new lands.

But one of the reasons why the problem of uprooted labour and of vagabondage was becoming less, was that the government of Elizabeth gradually found its way to a wiser mode of dealing with these difficulties. It slowly realised, first, that it was unjust to punish men merely for being poor and out of work, and secondly, that it was the duty of the community to provide for its poor. In a long series of Acts, which culminated in the great Poor Law of 1601, provision was made for the levying of rates to relieve poverty, and to provide work for the able-bodied. The responsibility for this new system (which, though it was rather unsympathetic, does represent the acceptance of a new responsibility on the part of the community for the welfare of its more unfortunate members) was thrown upon the parishes; and the poor rates were collected, and in detail distributed, by unpaid overseers elected by the parish vestry, which every ratepayer was entitled to attend. But the always active justices of the peace were charged with the duty of defining the rules under which this relief should be given in each county, as well as of regulating wages and seeing that able-bodied men were put to work.

If agriculture, and the rural society which depended on it, were undergoing change, so also were industry and commerce. Beyond all comparison the most important of English industries was the woollen manufacture. It had begun, as an important industry, in the fourteenth century, but it was now more prosperous than ever before, and its chief centres—the West country (Wiltshire and the surrounding counties), Norfolk, and Yorkshire—now spun and wove into cloth nearly the whole product of the English sheep. Their success was certainly helped by the wars in the Netherlands, which ruined the prosperity of the Flemish towns, so long the principal consumers of English wool, and sent thousands of the best artisans in Europe to take refuge in England. The wool trade affords a striking illustration of the interlacing of all the nation's economic interests. For it was because the demand for wool was so great that the landowners were cultivating sheep where corn had once been grown; and it was because England had, in her woollen cloths (now among the best in the

world), commodities which found a ready sale abroad that her foreign trade was advancing.

It was not only in the woollen industry, however, but in many different spheres, that a new vigour and enterprise were now showing themselves in manufacture. And under these conditions the mediæval organisation of industry was inevitably breaking down, just as the mediæval organisation of agriculture was breaking down. In the Middle Ages manufacture had in the main been carried on by the actual craftsman, who worked in his own home with his journeymen and apprentices, and sold the products of his industry in the market; and the conditions under which journeymen and apprentices might be employed, the number that a master-workman might engage, the varieties, qualities, measurements and prices of the goods which he might make, and in general all the rules governing production, were fixed by gilds or associations of the master-workmen themselves in every town. But this system, though it had many advantages, had also marked defects. It formed a great restraint upon individual enterprise or initiative: the man with new methods and ideas found it hard to persuade his fellow-craftsmen to let him adopt them, because they feared to be done out of their trade. It also prevented the organisation of industry on a large scale, because it forbade the man with substantial resources to employ a large number of workpeople.

For a long time past, in all the more progressive countries, the management of industry had been tending to fall into the hands of a class of employers who did not work, as a rule, with their own hands, but organised and paid for the work of other people. The 'capitalist' employer was becoming the dominant factor in industry. And it is easy to see how and why this happened, and how it stimulated the development of industry. In the woollen industry, for example, an enterprising and far-seeing man, if he commanded a sufficient amount of money, could buy wool of the best quality, instead of being dependent (like the master craftsman) upon what happened to come into the local market; he could get it spun by women over a wide area, paying them for their work; he could get to know what styles and patterns would command the readiest sale in the most profitable markets at home or abroad, and pay weavers to weave the cloth according to these requirements. And by these means he could generally produce the cloth that was required both better and cheaper than it could be

produced under the old system. But he could only do this if he had command of substantial amounts of money or 'capital' to finance the work at each stage, that is to say, if he was a 'capitalist.' Without a doubt the 'capitalist' system, under which the employer devoted himself to studying the markets and organising the work of groups of workpeople instead of working with his own hands, very largely contributed to the development and improvement of the English manufacturing industry. But it involved the breakdown of the old gild system, with its elaborate regulations and restrictions. And it tended to diminish the independence of the workman, whom it turned into a wage-earner more or less at the mercy of his employer, and without the protection which the gilds had formerly given.

The process of change from the gild system to a rudimentary capitalist system had been going on gradually and quietly for a very long time. But it became more rapid in the second half of the sixteenth century, partly because the growth of foreign trade encouraged it, and partly, perhaps, because the changes in agriculture created a workless class who were glad to be employed by the capitalist. If the change had taken place without any regulation or control, it might have inflicted grave hardships. But the government of Elizabeth was too intelligent to let this happen. It did its best to maintain a sound standard of life among the workpeople under the new conditions, and to give them some of the protection which the gilds had earlier afforded, by means of legislation about apprenticeship, wages and prices. These provisions were on the whole salutary and well-designed. They fell far short, however, of the elaborate regulations of the old gilds; and individual enterprise in industry was permitted to enjoy far more freedom than the Middle Ages had ever been willing to allow to it.

Of the growth of oversea trade we have already said something. But it was in the last part of the reign that it grew most rapidly. English traders were busy in the Netherlands, in France, in the Baltic, in the Mediterranean. Once the ocean monopoly of Spain had been broken, they were eager to stretch forth their hands for a share of the trade of the tropics and the New World, but the main developments in these fields naturally belonged to the next period. For the encouragement and assistance of trade in more distant waters, the men of this age, with the assistance of the government, developed new methods. They organised trading companies, which were not (like the companies of

to-day) joint-stock ventures, trading with a large subscribed capital: the Muscovy Company or the Levant Company in the Elizabethan period was simply a body of licensed traders, who subscribed to maintain permanent agencies abroad, but each carried on their individual ventures, or subscribed what they thought fit to the cost of fitting out particular 'voyages.' At the very end of the reign, in 1600, the greatest of all these trading companies, the East India Company, was established under royal charter, to develop the opportunities of trade in the East. Thus English trade, though it had government encouragement, was not subject to any such detailed and stifling government control as the trade of both Spain and Portugal had suffered from. Its development was due to individual enterprise, under government supervision, but not government control. And it throve largely because it could draw upon the vigour of individual enterprise.

No one who studies the history of this period can fail to be struck by the alertness of Elizabeth's government, its high sense of responsibility for the national welfare, and its readiness to try experiments to meet new conditions. It felt that it was its business to guide the nation through a period of rapid change and growth, and not to leave its development to accident. On the whole its interventions were fairly successful in the spheres of industry and commerce. Its regulations gave a great deal of free play to individual effort; at the same time they saved the country from the confusion which might have followed the sudden and unchecked dissolution of old methods of organisation.

§ 4. *The Religious Changes.*

Of all the aspects of national life there was none in which the guidance and control of government seemed to Elizabeth and her councillors to be more necessary than religion, for in other lands religious differences were producing national ruin. Elizabeth had no desire, as she once put it, 'to open windows into men's souls.' Her subjects might think what they pleased, so long as they did nothing that ran counter to the unity of the nation: not for her was the duty of burning men's bodies because their thoughts were wrong. But she desired uniformity and decency in external things, and she could not understand those who quarrelled about these externals, regarding them as symbols. She desired also that authority should be duly maintained: her own

authority in the first instance, as the supreme governor of the national Church—that is, of the nation in its ecclesiastical aspect; the authority of her bishops, as her agents, in the second. Her control over the Church was exercised not only through the bishops (and mainly the Archbishop of Canterbury), but through the High Commission, largely consisting of bishops, which was set up at the beginning of the reign, and had its powers amplified and defined by a succession of instruments, culminating in the Commission of 1583. This body exercised judicial and to some extent legislative powers (for those two functions of government were not clearly distinguished) not merely over clergymen, but over the whole nation in all religious and ecclesiastical matters. It was not bound by the common law of the land, nor did it follow the ordinary procedure of the common law courts: for example, it administered what was known as the *ex officio* oath, which compelled men to give evidence against themselves, contrary to the practice of English law, and it had a very wide latitude in the punishments which it inflicted.

Because the great majority of her people were, at the beginning of her reign, definitely Catholic in sentiment, Elizabeth desired that the doctrines and orders of service of the national Church should be so defined as to offend their susceptibilities as little as possible, and in external things she was anxious to keep nearly to the old ways. She hoped that the Catholics in England would gradually become accustomed to, and accept, the new order; and in this she was not disappointed: the great majority of Englishmen had become reconciled to the national Church before the end of her reign, all the more readily because loyalty to Rome had become unpatriotic during the struggle with Spain. There was little or no persecution of Catholics as such: only small fines for non-attendance at church. The comparatively few Catholics who were put to death were executed as traitors, as agents of the foreign power of the Pope, or as conspirators against the realm, not on the ground of their religious opinions.

But this policy brought the queen into sharp conflict with the more enthusiastic Protestants. There were a good many of these even at the beginning of the reign, especially in London and other towns, and in the prosperous south-east; and as the reign went on, and the struggle against Rome, not only in England but in all the continental countries, became more fierce and bitter,

they grew in numbers and enthusiasm, and their desire to purify the Church of England from what they regarded as relics of papistry became stronger. They did not desire mere toleration for themselves; they desired to reshape the national Church after their own minds, and they drew their inspiration from the fierce creed of Calvin, which was in Europe the fighting doctrine of Protestantism, and which had under Knox's guidance shaped both the creed and the system of government of the Scottish Church. From Elizabeth's point of view there could be no compromise with these men, loyal as they were to her in the struggle with Spain; because they stood for a challenge to the whole organisation and government of the national Church, and would, if they had their way (so she believed) shatter the unity of England, her greatest achievement. The idea that there could be more than one Church in the same State scarcely anybody entertained, either in England or elsewhere: it would have seemed as impossible to most of the Puritans as to Elizabeth herself.

As the reign wore on the conflict between Elizabeth and the bishops on the one hand, and the Puritans on the other, deepened and broadened. It began with a controversy about vestments. Elizabeth wished that, as far as possible, the traditional priestly vestments should be used, and that there should be uniformity of practice. The Puritans objected to priestly vestments, even to the surplice, because these were in their eyes symbols of Rome and of the claims of the priesthood. When Archbishop Parker, in 1566, issued a series of 'Advertisements' to define and enforce the proper usage, thirty-seven London clergymen refused compliance, and some of them were deprived of their livings. A violent pamphlet warfare sprang up: the chief pamphleteers on the Puritan side were thereupon forbidden to preach, and some of them were imprisoned. They took to holding secret conventicles. From vestments the controversy spread to rites and to doctrines; and, since the obnoxious rules were imposed by bishops, the Puritans began to challenge the whole episcopal system, and indirectly the supremacy of the Crown which lay behind it. The huge incomes of the bishops (they were richer than most of the peers) and the powers exercised by the ecclesiastical courts provided further grounds for attack. *An Admonishment to Parliament*, published in 1572 by two Puritan clergymen (who were promptly clapped into Newgate), showed how far the movement was going. They

demanded in effect the abolition of the episcopal system. 'At the beginning,' commented one orthodox clergyman, 'it was but a cap or surplice and a tippet; now it is grown to bishops, archbishops, and cathedral churches, to the overthrow of established order, and to the queen's authority in causes ecclesiastical. These reformers would take the supreme authority in ecclesiastical matters from the prince, and give it unto themselves with the grave seignory in every parish.' The archbishop, with a shrewd prophecy, foretold that the Puritans would 'in conclusion undo the queen and all others that depended on her.' But the queen's power was strong enough to quell these controversies, at all events for a time.

The leader of the Puritan movement was Cartwright, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. He was an uncompromising advocate of the Presbyterian system of Church government, which ultimately rests upon a democratic basis. Others went still further, notably Robert Browne, another Cambridge man, who claimed that each congregation ought to be self-sufficing and independent, and that neither bishop nor presbyteries should be necessary for the ordination of ministers of religion; and he tried to set up a working model of his system at Norwich in 1581. There were a good many Brownists, ancestors of the future Independents. But Presbyterians (who, as they had shown in Scotland, believed in uniformity and made high claims for the powers of a national Church) condemned the Brownists as vigorously as did Elizabeth. Several Brownists suffered on the scaffold as traitors, because they denied the royal supremacy. There were other sects too, Anabaptists among them; all following their doctrines in secret.

During the middle part of the reign, however, controversy was comparatively stilled, partly because of the Spanish danger, partly because the Archbishopric of Canterbury was held by the mild Grindal, who sympathised with the Puritans, and let them carry on their 'prophesyings.' But after 1588, when the Spanish danger was over, and Grindal had been succeeded by the unbending Whitgift (1583), conflict broke out again with greater vigour than ever. Now, too, the Elizabethan Church had taken firm root in the affections of the nation: it was no longer a mere political compromise, but had won the whole-hearted allegiance of many; a High Church party was springing up. On the other hand the Puritans were also eager for bolder action: in 1590 Cartwright started associations in various parts of

England, for the organisation of 'classes' and 'synods'—church councils on the Presbyterian model. This was a defiance of the royal supremacy which could not pass unregarded: the leaders of the Puritan party were brought before the High Commission and the Star Chamber. But they were released after an apology: they had too big a following to make it wise to punish them. Meanwhile a violent press controversy, perhaps the first in English history to arouse a widespread public interest, had broken out (1588-9). From a secret press, which was moved from place to place, a series of frequent, hard-hitting tracts appeared, under the name of *Martin Marprelate*. The authors of the Marprelate tracts, whoever they were, were fighting not only for Puritanism, but for the freedom of the press; for Whitgift, in his determination to crush the movement, had obtained a Star Chamber decree forbidding any manuscript to be printed unless it had been previously licensed by himself or the Bishop of London.

Thus the religious controversy was spreading into a political controversy. The Puritans were beginning to challenge some of the powers exercised by the Crown, besides advocating a democratic organisation of the Church. And indeed it was inevitable that their doctrines should lead them to be friendly to popular influence in government. Whitgift's charge against them was that, under a show of godliness, they nourished 'contempt of magistrates and popularity'; and by 'popularity,' he meant popular power. It is significant that throughout Elizabeth's reign there was always a considerable Puritan element in Parliament: her difficulties with Parliament most often turned upon Church questions. It is impossible to say what was the number of the Puritans: the fact that there were many Puritan members of Parliament tells us nothing about their strength, because Parliament was not in any true sense a popularly elected body. But it is certain that by the end of the reign they were numerous in London, in most towns, and all over the south-east; and that they included a large number of the ablest and most intelligent men in the country, and had a strong hold over the University of Cambridge.

§ 5. *The Queen and her Parliament.*

It is plain from what we have already seen that the real government of England rested with the queen and her council. They fixed the country's foreign policy, and

provided for its defence. They regulated and controlled the Church. They supervised and directed the economic policy of the country. They were responsible for the maintenance of order, through the justices of the peace, and supervised the administration of the law by judges and juries: juries who gave unsound verdicts were without hesitation haled before Star Chamber. In all these functions Parliament had scarcely a word to say. All the powers of the royal prerogative against which opposition was bitterest under the Stewarts were freely exercised by Elizabeth, commonly without complaint. She levied contributions like ship-money; she imposed new customs duties; she exercised the power of dispensing individuals from the operation of particular laws; she imprisoned men with no more definite ground than the special command of the queen; she issued many proclamations having the force of law. She was able to do all these things because hers was a national monarchy, the trusted spokesman and representative of the nation, defending the nation's existence against grave perils.

But for all that it is a mistake to think of Elizabeth's government as a despotism. Her power could not have lasted if it had not been based upon national approval, and this for two reasons: she had no paid army to enforce her will; and she had no class of salaried officials spread over the country to carry out her policy, whether it was approved or not. She had to depend upon the unpaid country gentlemen for all this work; and the country gentlemen were, of all classes in England, the most politically active, and the most ready to resist any serious oppression, as they showed in Parliament.

Moreover she had to count with Parliament; and Parliament, as we have seen, had never been in any true sense a 'subservient' body, except in the latter part of Henry VIII.'s reign. Elizabeth did not like having to deal with Parliament; she found it a fractious and meddlesome body, and summoned it as seldom as she could. But she had to summon it thirteen times during her reign. And she had to summon it just because its co-operation was necessary for the passing of important laws, and still more for the levying of the most productive taxes. Elizabeth had a large revenue independent of parliamentary grants, from Crown lands, from feudal dues of various sorts, and from the customs duties, which by immemorial prescription belonged to the Crown, though they were by custom granted afresh at the

beginning of each reign. She was as frugal as possible and did her best to make this revenue cover the cost of government, partly because taxes were unpopular, and partly to avoid meeting Parliament; she even strained the royal prerogative, like the Stewarts after her, to find modes of raising revenue; and, as we have seen, she adopted every means of enlisting private effort even in the conduct of war.

In fact, England was the most lightly taxed country in Europe. Parliament was undeniably stingy in its grants; and as the assessments upon which the grants were made had not been changed since the fourteenth century, they yielded extremely disappointing returns. Frugal as she was, Elizabeth had to run into debt, and to sell Crown lands on a large scale. But this is in itself a proof that the control of Parliament over the revenues of the country was still real, and could not be overridden even by Elizabeth.

In every one of Elizabeth's parliaments there was abundant evidence that though the members, like the country as a whole, respected the queen and supported her general policy, they were not ready to sacrifice any of their own rights, and did not lack courage in standing up for their privileges. The queen frequently rated them for presuming beyond their rights, especially when they ventured to discuss her marriage, or to criticise her Church policy, as they often did very sharply; 'Beware how you prove your prince's patience,' she told them in 1567. Rarely a session passed without one or more members being committed to prison; and in 1593 five members were sent to the Tower for venturing to discuss the succession to the crown, one of them, Peter Wentworth, the staunchest upholder of parliamentary privilege, remaining in duress till he died three years later. She used in a wholesale way the power of vetoing bills: in the Parliament of 1598 she vetoed no less than forty-eight out of ninety-one.

But if these facts show that Elizabeth was far indeed from submitting to parliamentary control, they show also that Parliament was tenacious of its powers and courageous in enforcing them, even against a much-loved sovereign. If many bills were vetoed, it is clear that Parliament was active in legislation, and did not leave the initiative in that respect to the Crown, as it did under Henry VIII. If members had to be scolded and imprisoned for insisting upon discussing questions of public policy which were,

by usage, decided by the queen and her council, manifestly they were striving to take a larger part in the determination of the national destinies.

Three features of the relation between the queen and her parliaments ought to be noted. In the first place it was the House of Commons, not the House of Lords, which played the active part: the House of Lords was already falling into the background. That is to say, it was the country gentlemen and the lawyers (for the House of Commons was filled with country gentlemen and lawyers) who were striving to attain a real partnership with the Crown in the government of the country—a far different state of things from that which had marked the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the House of Commons was largely controlled by parties of great barons. In the second place, every Parliament of the reign showed a large number, and some apparently a majority, of members who were Puritan in their sympathies. Most of their differences with the queen arose on religious questions. That is to say, a large proportion of the men who sat in the House of Commons was affected by ideas which almost inevitably led in the direction of increased popular control. In the third place, the independence of the House of Commons and its readiness to come into conflict with the queen became much more marked towards the end of the reign, in spite of the loyalty and affection which all felt for the great princess who had guided the country through a perilous pass. That is to say, once the period of danger was over, men began to feel that the time had come when the discretionary power of the Crown was no longer needed to the same extent; and when Parliament could begin to claim a greater share in the control of national affairs.

During her last years and in her last three parliaments, Elizabeth seemed almost to have lost touch with her people, or with those highly important elements in it whose ideas were expressed by the House of Commons. The discontent reached its height in the Parliament of 1601, when a vigorous attack—not the first by any means, but the most strongly pressed—was made against the wholesale licences which the queen had granted to various individuals, giving them the monopoly of the right to manufacture various commodities. Some of these licences were of the nature of patents, and had the effect of encouraging new industries; but others were undoubtedly mischievous. The temper of the House of Commons became ugly: they proposed

to introduce a bill to abolish all monopolies, which would have been a direct challenge to the queen. Elizabeth was too wise to risk an open conflict. By proclamation she abolished all monopolies at a blow; and in a speech to her faithful Commons not only won back all their affection, but made a claim for herself that they could echo in their hearts, and that might fairly be inscribed as her epitaph:—

'Though God hath raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my crown: that I have reigned with your loves. To be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasing to them that bear it. For myself, I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a king, or royal authority of a queen, as delighted that God had made me His instrument to maintain His truth and glory, and to defend this kingdom from peril, dishonour, tyranny and oppression.'

She died eighteen months later, without seeing the inevitable issue raised between the royal authority which she had wielded so royally, and the aspirations of the nation which she had taught to be proud of its nationhood. With her died an era. The ages of purely island history were over; so also, for England, was the age of willing submission to royal tutelage: and after their long preparation the peoples of the islands were about to enter upon a career of world-influence, and upon a bold advance, ahead of all other peoples, towards the ideal of national self-government. What is more, they were entering upon the new era as a group of States united under the same crown: as a Commonwealth of Nations differing from one another yet indissolubly linked together. For the successor of Elizabeth was James VI. of Scotland, great-grandson of Henry VII.; and with his accession the long centuries of strife between the peoples of the islands came formally to an end.

[For the literary movements of the time, Saintsbury's *Elizabethan Literature*, Lee's *Shakespeare*, Raleigh's *Shakespeare*, Church's *Spenser*, and other volumes of the English Men of Letters Series; for social and economic conditions, *The England of Shakespeare* (Clarendon Press), Meredith's *Economic History of England*, Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, Tawney's *Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*; for religious history, Frere's *English Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I.*, Neal's *History of the Puritans*; for politics and Parliament, Prothero's *Constitutional Documents*, Hallam's *Constitutional History*, Pollard's *England from the Death of Henry VIII. to the Death of Elizabeth*.]

BOOK IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL SELF-GOVERNMENT; AND THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH EXPANSION OVERSEA, A.D. 1603-1660

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the seventeenth century the peoples of the islands began to build on the foundations already laid.

In the first place, they appeared for the first time as a single unit in the life of the civilised world. They were united under the rule of a single crown by the succession of James VI. of Scotland to the thrones of England and Ireland. Not that they were as yet in any real sense united into a single State. Scotland retained its distinct existence, with its own body of law, its own Parliament, and, above all, its own Church, and there was as yet little friendship between the two nations; but the mutual influence of England and Scotland became more intimate and constant than it had ever been before. Ireland was a recently conquered country; unfortunately it was her fate to suffer in this period troubles even greater than she had suffered in the last; the opportunity of fostering friendship, which was still open in 1603, was lost; and still bitterer memories than those of Elizabeth's reign were created. Nevertheless the union of the islands under a single crown meant much.

In the second place, now that the barriers to ocean traffic raised by Spain were broken down, the English began the task of creating new Englands beyond the seas, and of developing a great trade in the tropics and the East. Colonies were founded on the Atlantic shore of North America and in the West Indies; and although their beginnings were timid, and little supported by the power of the State, they were well established by the middle of the century. Almost from their foundation these first English settlements oversea were distinguished from the colonies of other nations by the establishment of the practice of local self-government, which had become second nature to the English. At the same time the trade connexion with India, which was to lead to astonishing results, was begun in these years, and well rooted. These were, as yet, almost purely English enterprises: the day of the

full participation of all the islanders in them had not yet come. But England was not the only pioneer in this field. All the seaboard countries of Europe took a share, and an acute rivalry for colonies and overseas trade began, which was to last till our own day, and to affect deeply the relations of the European States. In this period the most successful rivals of the English were their recent allies, the Dutch: their mutual jealousy was such as to lead to war.

In the third place the development which had already been foreshadowed in the previous age took place; and both the English and the Scottish peoples—and even, in a certain measure, the Irish—began to work out a system not merely of local or of ecclesiastical, but of national self-government. The great controversies, resulting in civil war, to which these aspirations gave rise, form the main stuff of the history of the islands during the half century. They were of equal moment for the whole of the future Commonwealth, since they reacted upon the development of the institutions of all its members, and decided that all were to enjoy political freedom; though the form of it was scarcely yet determined. This development was all the more remarkable, because during the same period nearly all the European States were having the chains of despotic government fixed upon them, and the predominant political thought of the age held that it was only by means of absolute monarchy that order could be maintained and progress secured. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the island peoples was to show that this was not so.

While the islands were thus engaged, in Europe, and especially in Central Europe, fierce wars were being waged, which were to have the effect of changing the aspect of the civilised world. But in these struggles the islands took very little part; and when at length they did begin, in the next period, to play once more a great part in European politics, they were at first a little bewildered by the changed aspect of affairs.

CHAPTER I

EUROPE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

§ 1. *Problems of Peace and War.*

No less than the islands, Europe was entering upon a new age at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[1] When the century opened she was weary of religious wars, and the fierce conflicts of the last half century seemed to have decided the fate of the rival religions over the greater part of the Continent. Spain and Italy were definitely Roman Catholic; indeed, the ascendency of the Roman faith had not been challenged in either country. On the other hand, Denmark (with which went Norway) and Sweden were as definitely Protestant. In France the desperate wars of religion, after forty years of fighting, had failed to destroy the Huguenots. Though Henry of Navarre had become a Catholic (1593) to gain the crown and pacify the land, and though France was officially a Catholic country, the Protestants were given, by the Edict of Nantes (1598), the right to follow their own faith under certain limitations, and they received the control over certain fortified towns as a safeguard. This was a real, though incomplete, experiment in religious toleration. In the Netherlands the United Provinces of the North (corresponding to the modern kingdom of Holland) had securely established their independence as a Protestant State, though Spain refused to recognise the fact till 1648; and they were at the opening of the most glorious period in their history, a period of immense commercial activity and prosperity, and of almost equally valuable literary and artistic achievement. But the southern provinces of the Netherlands (corresponding to modern Belgium)—once the centres of great industries and of vigorous trade—had remained loyal to Catholicism, and were still under the blighting rule of Spain, which made it impossible for them to revive their ancient glories.

Only in Central Europe was the religious conflict still

[1] For the state of Europe at this period see the map, Atlas, Plate 8.

undetermined. Germany and the neighbouring Austrian lands were still in the condition in which they had been left by Charles v., divided, under the nominal headship of the Emperor, into more than three hundred little States, whose petty sovereigns, in accordance with the principle *cujus regio ejus religio*, had the right to determine the faith of their subjects. At the beginning of the century the Protestants had a considerable numerical ascendency in the greater part of Germany ; even in the lands of the Habsburgs—Austria, Bohemia, and what the Turks had left of Hungary—the Protestants were very numerous, especially in Bohemia. But the Protestant party in Germany was weakened by its division into two sections, Lutherans and Calvinists, who were very jealous of one another ; and also by the fact that none of the numerous Protestant princes possessed any considerable military power. The head of the Lutheran party was the Elector of Saxony ; the head of the Calvinist party, who organised themselves into a separate Union in 1608, was the Elector Palatine of the Rhine. On the other hand, the Catholics were showing a new vigour and a tendency to aggressiveness. One of the Catholic princes, the Duke of Bavaria, was building up an efficient army, and he had brought the minor Catholic powers under his leadership in the Catholic League (1607).

If it came to war between the two religions in Germany, as seemed every year more likely, the Catholics could count upon the strong support of the House of Habsburg, the two branches of which (in Spain and Austria) both counted among the greatest powers of Europe. The Spanish branch had indeed lost greatly in prestige since its crushing defeats by England and the United Provinces. But Spain had lost no territory in the long fight except the Northern Netherlands ; territorially she was still by far the greatest State in Europe, and she still possessed the wealth of the Indies. Public opinion in Europe, and also in England, had not realised the internal weakness which was soon to reduce Spain to the level of a third-rate power, and regarded her with fear. The Austrian branch of the Habsburgs was weaker, owing to the divisions which existed in its dominions. But if these could be overcome, Austria with its wide lands and warlike subjects would be a very formidable power.

In any case the might of the Habsburgs would surely be sufficient to ensure victory for the Catholic princes of Germany against the divided forces of the Protestants, unless the Protestant States of Europe came to their aid.

And if that were to happen, the result would be a general European war such as had never yet been seen. Extremists on both sides were eager that the final conflict should be brought about, and hoped for a crushing victory for their own side. Among the Puritans in England there were many who would have rejoiced to see their country take what they considered to be its proper place, as the leader of the Protestant cause. But they did not want to take part in a war on the Continent if it could be avoided; a vigorous attack on Spain by sea was what most of them longed for. They were, in truth, rather ignorant of the European situation, and had very little sense of the horror of a universal war such as might easily come about, and nearly did come about.

There were some wise men in Europe who foresaw this danger and wished to avoid it; and who believed that peace might be maintained if only the policy of nations ceased to be guided by religious rivalries. One of these was King Henry IV. of France,[1] the great king who had ended the French wars of religion, and who knew from bitter experience the horrors of religious wars, and the harm they did to religion. In his view the great danger to Europe was to be found in the threatening power of the Habsburgs. He exaggerated the danger, like other people; but it was natural for a Frenchman to exaggerate it, since France was almost surrounded by Habsburg lands, which included some really French territory.[2] Henry's aim was, disregarding religious differences, to combine under his own leadership the forces of resistance to the Habsburgs; if war should follow, he hoped to strengthen the position of France by acquiring the Habsburg territories on his own borders. This became the traditional policy of France for a century and a half to come. Henry's great minister Sully has told us in his memoirs, written after his retirement, that his master had entertained a yet more ambitious project: no less than the creation of a sort of European federation or League of Nations for the maintenance of peace, once the Habsburg danger had been removed. It is more than doubtful whether Henry ever entertained such an idea; but it is a sign of growing dissatisfaction with the endless wars from which Europe suffered that a responsible statesman, even in retirement, should recommend such an idea.

Another advocate of peace was James I. and VI., the new

[1] There is a life of Henry IV., by P. F. Willert (*Heroes of the Nations*).
[2] See the map, Atlas, Plate 9.

ruler of the British Islands, who had a much wider acquaintance with European politics than most of his subjects. His notion was that peace might be maintained by the co-operation of England, the leading Protestant power, with Spain, the leading Catholic power. To that end he did his best to make friends with Spain. As soon as possible after his succession he closed the Elizabethan war with Spain by a rather unsatisfactory treaty (1604), which left unmentioned the chief subject of controversy, the right of trade in the Indies. Then he tried to arrange a marriage between his heir and a Spanish princess—the normal mode at that time of making friendship between States. This will-o'-the-wisp James pursued throughout the greater part of his reign. But the Spaniards never began to understand his motives. At first they thought he was going to turn Catholic: then they found it useful to humour the pedantic king, as a means of keeping England quiet. Nor did James' subjects sympathise with his aims. They regarded him as a traitor to the Protestant cause; the idea of a Spanish marriage was abhorrent to them, and contributed in no small degree to alienate the king from his Parliament. They had more sympathy when, in 1613, James married his daughter to the Elector Palatine, the leading Calvinist prince in Germany, and the head of the aggressive Protestant party in that country. But they could not see that the two marriage projects were part of the same policy—the policy of keeping the peace between the rival religions.

The friends of European peace were in a small minority at that date, and James I. was in this respect ahead of his time. Yet these years saw the beginning of a very fruitful development, which had as its aim the restriction and regulation of the disastrous inter-state wars with which European history had been fuller than ever since the downfall of the mediæval idea that the whole civilised world ought to obey common laws. International law now came to birth. Its real origin may be attributed to the great Dutch lawyer and philosopher, Grotius, whose book *de Jure Belli et Pacis* was published in 1625. The basis of Grotius' treatise was the belief that there must be, and indeed was, a common body of rules which all States ought to obey in their relations with one another. The surprising thing is that the rules which Grotius worked out, and which were expanded and developed in a series of later treatises, were generally accepted throughout Europe, were referred

to as binding in a number of European treaties, beginning with the great treaties of Westphalia in 1648, and were on the whole tolerably well observed during the next two centuries. International law, as developed by Grotius and his successors, did not try to prevent war; it aimed at regulating it, and at defining the rights and duties of States in relation to one another, whether in war or peace. But it was the beginning of an advance towards international co-operation.

The idea of international co-operation for the maintenance of peace was one of the fruitful political ideas of this period; but it was only coming to birth, and exercised little influence on the course of events. Another idea, far more characteristic of the period, and far more potent in its influence, was the idea of the value and excellence of absolute monarchy as a safeguard of society and as the only sure means of progress. This was a natural idea in such a country as France, just released from a long period of misery, from which a strong central government might have saved it. Almost everywhere, therefore, and in France most of all, the traditional or customary restraints upon the power of rulers were being removed. The mediæval Estates, for example, lost such power as they still retained: the last meeting of the States General before the French Revolution was in this period. This was not the result merely of the ambition of kings, though that helped. It was in accord with the predominant political theories of the time. There had been a great deal of political theorising in the sixteenth century, and some of it had been favourable to popular or even democratic ideas. But the predominant doctrines even then, and still more in the new age, favoured absolute monarchy. When the power of monarchs was restricted, anarchy and tumult seemed to result; when it was unrestricted, peace and order reigned. The power of monarchy seemed to be the divine ordinance for the maintenance of good order in States; and these ideas gave support to the semi-religious doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings which is characteristic of the age.

It may be noted that the Reformation had greatly encouraged this doctrine; for some substitute had to be found for the discredited authority of Pope and Emperor. Luther had preached the supreme power or duty of princes to regulate even the consciences of their subjects; and kings who, like the Tudors in England, made themselves the popes of their own realm, were apt to claim that they, equally with

the Pope, were answerable to God alone. Naturally kings welcomed a theory so pleasing to themselves, and so much in accord with the political tendencies of the age. It is not too much to say that the theory of Divine Right was everywhere widely accepted, save in the Netherlands and in England; and even in England there were many, besides the king himself, who quite honestly believed in it. For nearly two centuries to come the prevailing view, even among philosophers, was that absolute monarchy was the best safeguard for the existence of social order; and the civil war which followed the English repudiation of this view seemed to confirm it.

§ 2. *The Thirty Years' War.*

If Henry IV. of France had lived, he might have staved off the threatened religious war in Germany, or turned it into a purely political struggle between the house of Habsburg and a confederation headed by France. But he was assassinated by a Catholic fanatic in 1610; and therefore the war became inevitable, for all James I.'s attempts to maintain peace by making friendship with Spain were wholly futile. In 1618 it at last broke out; a terrible and desolating war, which raged for thirty years. It did not become a universal war; but it came very near to it, since nearly every European State was at one time or another drawn into it; and at its close there had to be made the first of a series of general European settlements, the latest of which belongs to our own days.

The war began with a revolt of the Bohemians or Czechs against the rule of the Habsburgs. Bohemia[1] had had a great history as a distinct nation during the Middle Ages, especially in the fifteenth century, when, under the reformer Hus, she had successfully defied Catholic Europe. The Czechs had never admitted without question the claim of the Habsburgs to rule Bohemia, a claim which came from one of the lucky marriages for which that family was famous; and when they were invited to recognise as the inheritor of the throne a fanatical Catholic, Ferdinand of Styria, they rebelled, and, in the hope of getting help from the German Protestants, invited Frederick the Elector Palatine to accept the throne. The elector was James I.'s son-in-law, and hoped for English aid. He asked James' advice,

[1] There is a short history of Bohemia, by Count Lutzow, in Everyman's Library.

but accepted the throne before the advice could be given him. James had no sympathy with what seemed to him a usurpation, and a deliberate precipitation of the dreaded war; and in any case England, having no army, could give no help in Bohemia. The Lutheran princes of Germany also stood aloof. The Habsburgs, aided by the German Catholic princes, quickly broke the back of the Bohemian resistance at the battle of the White Mountain (1620); and after driving out 'the winter king' (as Frederick was called, from the brevity of his reign) proceeded, by fierce persecution, to destroy Protestantism, and so far as possible the national spirit, in Bohemia: the unhappy country did not begin to revive till the nineteenth century, or recover its freedom till the Great War. So ended the first, or Bohemian, stage of the war.

The Austrians and the German Catholics next proceeded to overrun the original dominions of Frederick [1] and the other Calvinist princes of South Germany; and in this easy task they had the aid of a Spanish army, which marched down the Rhine from the Netherlands. This showed how vain were James' hopes from Spain. He redoubled his futile endeavours to get Spain to play the part of a mediator. His son Charles, the destined bridegroom, and his favourite Buckingham, even went off on a wild goose chase to Madrid to try to settle the marriage alliance. But the only result was that friendly relations with Spain were broken, and a new war between England and Spain broke out in 1624. Its only important event was an ill-managed attempt to seize Cadiz (1625), which led to humiliating failure. James made no attempt to save his son-in-law, the elector, though a few English volunteers went to share in his ruin; and Frederick and his English wife, Elizabeth, driven from their capital at Heidelberg, became wanderers for the rest of their lives. Their sons, Princes Rupert and Maurice, eventually came to England, where Rupert played a very important part in the Civil War and in the reign of Charles II.

The victory over Frederick and the South German Protestants was a great triumph for the Catholic party. They saw before them the chance of a complete overthrow of German Protestantism. The only chance of saving the situation seemed to be that England, and if possible France also, should intervene, either directly, or by persuading one or more of the northern powers to invade Germany, and providing them with the means of doing so.

[1] See the map of Germany, Atlas, Plate 23 (*b*).

Fortunately a great statesman, Cardinal Richelieu,[1] had come into power in France. He was to be the chief builder of the strength of the French monarchy, and the continuator of the policy of Henry IV.: Cardinal though he was, he cared more to increase French power by checking the House of Habsburg than to win a possible victory for Catholicism. On the English side James had practically abandoned the control of foreign affairs to Buckingham and Prince Charles, who soon succeeded to the throne (1625). Charles and Buckingham, anxious to regain the Palatinate, to save German Protestantism, and to win popularity in England, made an alliance with France, which was cemented by the marriage of Charles to the French Princess Henrietta Maria. But this was only part of a big combination, which was to include the Dutch, Venice and Denmark. Denmark undertook to send an army into Germany to the aid of the Protestants, the cost of which was to be partly paid by English subsidies; and an English army was also to be sent, either through the Netherlands or through France.

It was a great combination, and, if it had been fully carried into effect, would have saved the situation. But one great difficulty was that Charles had no money wherewith to fulfil his promises, because his Parliament, despite their zeal for the Protestant cause, would not vote him any. A scratch army—the levying and billeting of which caused endless difficulties in England—was indeed sent across, but it melted away through sickness and bad organisation without achieving anything. The King of Denmark never received a penny of his promised subsidies. His army was crushingly defeated at Lutter (1626); and North Germany as well as South now lay at the feet of the Habsburgs.

France had done little, mainly because an outbreak among the nobles of the Huguenot party distracted Richelieu's efforts. Charles had the folly to promise the loan of ships to help the French in reducing the Protestant fortress of La Rochelle, which inevitably aroused furious indignation among the Puritans at home, and a mutiny in the fleet. Before long Charles had quarrelled with Richelieu, and a foolish war with France was added to the war with Spain (1627). Its only important event was a futile and disastrous expedition, led by the Duke of Buckingham, against the island of Ré in the Bay of Biscay. The object

[1] There is a life of Richelieu, by Sir R. Lodge (*Foreign Statesmen*).

of this folly was to regain popularity in England; its result was to render impossible any effective intervention in Germany by either England or France. After this disgraceful series of blunders and betrayals, Charles made no further attempt to take part in the war. He was deep in debt; he had quarrelled fatally with Parliament, and could not get any money from that source; he had resolved to govern without Parliament, and this involved rigid economy and the avoidance of foreign adventures. Thus the parliamentary strife in England, which will be the theme of later chapters, had its effect upon the European war; the Protestant cause in Germany was left in the lurch; England was humiliated by the reckless levity of its king's promises, and his total failure to perform them; and another ground of quarrel was given to the parliamentary opposition.

The remainder of the Thirty Years' War did not directly affect the history of the islands; but its influence in the history of Europe was so great that a summary of it, however bald, must be attempted.

The result of the utter defeat of the Danish intervention was to place the whole of Germany at the disposal of the Catholic party. The Lutheran princes were helpless. The Catholics demanded the restoration of all the Church lands which had been taken over by the Protestants during the previous seventy years (1629). The Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand saw within his grasp a dictatorship of Germany, such as even Charles V. had never enjoyed. The great adventurer, Wallenstein, who had raised an army of mercenaries, living by plunder, to fight on the Catholic side, held even the Baltic shores. But this brought in the Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus,[1] the greatest soldier of his age. He did not want to see the Swedish power on the Baltic, which he was building up, threatened by so dangerous a rival; and he was also a devoted Protestant. Backed by French subsidies, and helped by the fear of the Habsburgs which French diplomatists sowed even among the Catholic princes, he invaded Germany (1630), and in a brilliant campaign broke for a time the power of the Catholics at the battles of Breitenfeld (1631) and Lützen (1632). Unfortunately he lost his life in the second of these battles. But he had saved Northern Germany for Protestantism, and destroyed the chance of German unity under the

[1] There is a life of Gustavus Adolphus by C. R. L. Fletcher (*Heroes of the Nations*).

Habsburg crown. The relative extension of Protestantism and Romanism in Germany remains much as he left it; and, so far as the original cause of quarrel was concerned, the war might now have ended.

It lasted, however, for another sixteen years. In this last and longest phase of the miserable war, unhappy Germany became the battle-ground of ambitious powers, especially Sweden and France (which entered the struggle in 1633), and of soldiers of fortune, who led armies which maintained themselves wholly by plunder. The serious feature of this period of the war was that France, at last freed (for a time) from troubles at home by the defeat of the Huguenot rebels, seized the opportunity to increase her power at the expense both of Germany and of the Spanish dominions. Even when the war in Germany ended, in 1648,[1] the war between France and Spain still went on for another eleven years (1659), encouraged by a desolating civil strife which had broken out in France.

The result of this appalling war, the ugliest and the most brutal that Europe had yet seen, was to bring about the almost total ruin of Germany. She had been a populous and industrious country; her traders had been among the most prosperous in Europe. Now she had lost half her population, and the ravages of war had destroyed most of her wealth. Disunited before, her disunion was made final and apparently hopeless, because under the treaty of Westphalia (1648) it was placed under the guardianship of Europe. Her nominal emperors, of the Habsburg House, henceforward made no effort to turn their authority into a reality, but confined themselves to the extension of their own dominions in the south-east; and though there were still imperial courts and councils, and (on paper) an imperial army, they counted for nothing. Happier foreign countries, united while she was divided, held blocks of her territory: France had acquired most of Alsace, and had a strong footing in Lorraine, both parts of the old German kingdom; Sweden held Pomerania and controlled the mouth of the Elbe. Among her three hundred petty States there were only two or three which counted for anything in European affairs. One of these, the electorate of Brandenburg, later to become the kingdom of Prussia, was rising into prominence, and made some gains as a result of the war;[2] but no one could foretell as yet the great part it was in

[1] See the map of Europe at the peace of Westphalia, Atlas, Plate 9

[2] See the map of the growth of Prussia, Atlas, Plate 24 (*a*).

future to play. As a factor in the life of Europe and of Western civilisation, Germany was almost blotted out of the map. Spain, too, had manifestly sunk to the second rank of powers, though she still retained nearly all her territories. But two powers had emerged as of the first rank. One of these was Sweden, which entered upon a brief period of military splendour, too exacting for her resources. The other was France, which, though her greatness was momentarily obscured by civil strife in 1648, had manifestly become the greatest power in Europe, and was about to enter upon one of the most magnificent periods in her wonderful history.

While these ugly but highly important events were taking place in Europe, the islands were too much concerned with their own affairs to pay any serious regard to them, because they were engrossed first in religious and political controversy, and then in civil wars.

Yet in several ways the Thirty Years' War directly affected the fortunes of the islands. In the first place, while the war raged none of the European powers was in a position to intervene in the domestic strife of England. In the second place, many Englishmen and many Scots, like Dugald Dalgetty in Scott's *Legend of Montrose*, enlisted as mercenaries or volunteers in the armies of Gustavus, Wallenstein, and other leaders in the long war. They came back, having learnt the art of war in the most extensive practical school of it that Europe had yet seen, to place their trained skill at the service of one side or the other in the Civil Wars. In the third place, with the exception of the Dutch, the European States, and more especially France, were too much engrossed by the struggle to pay much attention to the non-European world. The quiet growth of the English colonies in this period owes a good deal to that. Certainly it was due to the Thirty Years' War that there was no German competition, either at this time or for many generations afterwards, in colonisation and oversea trade.

[A lively general sketch of European history in this period is to be found in Wakeman's *Ascendency of France*; see also Abbott's *Expansion of Europe*. Gardiner's *Thirty Years' War* (Epochs of Modern History) is an admirable short sketch; the standard book on the subject is Gindely's *Thirty Years' War* (Eng. trans.). Lord Acton has a lecture on the Thirty Years' War in his *Lectures on Modern History*. For international law and movements towards peace, Muir's *Nationalism and Internationalism*; for the ideas of absolute monarchy, J. N. Figgis' *Divine Right of Kings*.]

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST COLONIES, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF TRADE WITH INDIA

§ 1. *International Rivalry in Oversea Trade.*

During the first half of the seventeenth century a movement began which was in the long run to prove far more important to Europe and to the world than the Thirty Years' War: the sea-board peoples of Northern Europe, taking advantage of the downfall of the Spanish-Portuguese monopoly and of the opening of the seas, began to press forth into the non-European world, to throw round the globe the tentacles of their trade and influence, and to plant in empty lands new centres of their civilisation.[1] The primary motives of these enterprises were economic. The northern nations desired to tap the sources of the wealth of Spain and Portugal. They desired to get direct access to the luxuries of the tropics, many of which, like the spices with which winter stores of food were made palatable, had practically become necessaries, while others, like sugar and tobacco, were rapidly coming to take the same rank. They also desired a more abundant supply of some non-tropical products which they themselves scarcely supplied in sufficient abundance—fish, for example, or timber, or tar. But there were other motives besides these: the desire to find new homes for their surplus population was one, though not yet a very powerful one; the more vulgar desire merely to acquire territory also counted; and there had to be an outlet for the adventurous spirit which had been cultivated by the long strife of the previous age. Add to this that religious controversy drove refugees abroad, and the wide range and varied character of the movement which now began becomes intelligible.

Though the enterprises of the English oversea were in the long run to prove the most important, they by no means stood alone, nor were they the most remarkable, in this

[1] There is a general map of European settlement during this period, Atlas, Plate 48.

period. The peoples who played the leading parts in this movement were, in the order of their importance, first the Dutch, next the English, next, after a considerable interval, the French; the parts played by the Danes and Swedes were relatively insignificant. Our primary concern is with the English achievement; but it is important to see it in its relation with the rest, partly because this brings out its distinctive character, which was to be of extreme importance for the future, and partly because many even of the lands explored or settled by other nations were ultimately to become members of the British Commonwealth.

It is at first sight difficult to understand why the Dutch, a small and far from rich nation which had been passing through an exhausting ordeal, should have attained the remarkable pre-eminence which fell to it during this period in oversea trade and colonisation. One important reason was that they were still at war with Spain till 1648, while England made peace in 1604. The English government, bent upon cultivating Spanish friendship, could not allow direct attacks upon Spanish or Portuguese possessions, much as its subjects wanted to make them. The Dutch government, on the other hand, aimed at striking every possible blow at their enemy. The two great trading companies which controlled Dutch enterprise during this period, the Company of the East Indies and the Company of the West Indies, were largely designed for this end, and practically divided the whole field of operations between them. They were national organisations, constantly assisted and supported by the State, and they aimed at organising all private effort in these fields towards a common end. The corresponding English companies were much more numerous, much weaker and more divided in their aims, and they never had such a national character: they were regulated and restrained, rather than stimulated and helped, by government. Moreover to the Dutch the development of national wealth and strength by foreign trade was almost the supreme national interest; whereas the English were throughout this period, as we shall see, mainly concerned with religious and political problems, and the French were distracted by internal discords, and by their growing ambitions of ascendency in Europe.

All the nations which took part in this great movement proceeded in much the same manner. They did not place the whole of their enterprises under government control, as Spain and Portugal had done with unhappy results.

They organised chartered companies, in which groups of private merchants were linked together under State supervision and encouraged by the concession of a monopoly of the trade between their own country and the lands covered by their charters. These companies were at first not joint-stock companies in the modern sense: they had only a comparatively small common fund, with which trading stations and forts were maintained, while their members invested separately in a single voyage, or series of voyages. But the Dutch companies were almost from the first organised on so big a scale, and so closely in relation with their government, that they can scarcely be called private enterprises; while the French companies were so unsuccessful in their first stage that government soon had to take them under its control, and they never did much until in the second half of the century they were almost turned into government departments. The English companies, on the other hand—not only the greatest, the East India Company, which was founded by Elizabeth in 1600, but the two Virginia Companies of 1606, and a whole series of others—were from the first genuine private organisations, really run by the merchants who composed them, in spite of the supervision exercised over them by government. They seemed to suffer at first by the lack of government help. In the long run it was the secret of their success. Organised and co-operative private effort built up English foreign trade, and founded the English colonies, almost without government assistance; and for that reason the English experiments were far more varied, and far less tied up by regulations, than those of the other countries.

§ 2. *European Enterprises in the East: the East India Company.*

The field towards which trading enterprise first and most eagerly turned was the Far East, where the Portuguese had hitherto had everything to themselves. There were two main branches of the Eastern trade: the trade with the continent of India, and the trade with the Malay Archipelago and especially the rich little Spice Islands at its heart;[1] other branches of Eastern trade—with Persia, and with Japan and China—were of quite minor importance. Of the two, the Spice Island trade was much the more lucrative. It yielded profits sometimes amounting to

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 49.

1200 *per cent.* on a single voyage; and as there were many island chiefs in a backward state of civilisation whom the Portuguese had partially conquered, it was possible here, as it was not in India, to enforce commercial monopoly by political control.

Into this field the Dutch and the English at first entered as comrades in arms, but this did not last long. The Dutch had great advantages. In the first place, they were free, as after 1604 the English were not, to attack the Portuguese directly; in the second place they had much larger funds, and could raise armies, build factories, and establish and garrison forts. Naturally they did not see why the English should take advantage of their expenditure, and the early partnership quickly passed into almost open hostility. James I. tried to patch up an agreement in 1619, but it was useless. Nicholas Courthope long held out gallantly in the island of Pularoon, which the English claimed. But the Dutch were too powerful. In 1623 they arrested a small group of English traders in the island of Amboyna (which was absolutely in Dutch control) on a baseless charge of conspiracy, tortured them to exact confessions, and put twelve out of eighteen of them to death. This episode, which was known as the Massacre of Amboyna, practically ended British trade in the Spice Islands, where (and in most of the Malay Archipelago) the Dutch remained politically as well as commercially supreme, as they still do to this day. But coming as the climax of a long rivalry in which the English had had much the worst, and kept fresh by a continuance of this rivalry, it ended the comradeship of the two enemies of Spain, and prepared the way for the Anglo-Dutch wars of the middle of the century.

The Dutch, left supreme in the Far East, developed their opportunities with astonishing energy and success. They practically controlled the trade with Japan. They explored the waters south of the Malay Peninsula, and between 1605 and 1650 their great explorers (Tasman, 1642-4, above all) [1] discovered the continent of Australia and the islands which still bear the Dutch name of New Zealand. They did not settle in these lands, well fitted as they were for European settlers, because it was not colonisation but trade which was their object. Later in the century (1651) they made a settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, which was to have a great future. But they did not intend it to be a colony, only a post at which ships could refit and be

[1] See the map of his explorations, Atlas, Plate 48.

supplied with fresh vegetables on the way to India. For that reason it remained under the control of the Dutch East India Company, which denied all rights of self-government to the settlers.

Driven from the Spice Islands, the English East India Company had to devote itself to the continent of India, to which, indeed, several of its earlier voyages had been sent, and where it already had several factories at the time of the Massacre of Amboyna. The Dutch were serious rivals here also; and in the island of Ceylon the Dutch gradually established an almost complete monopoly. But on the mainland they never drove out the English: indeed all the European trading nations had their factories in India, and none of them had yet begun to dream of political power in that land.

When the Portuguese first came to India a century earlier they had found it in a condition of disorganisation, and this had enabled them to conquer and possess areas on its coast. But since then a great power, highly organised and civilised, had established its direct authority over the whole of Northern India, though Southern India was still divided between several smaller States.[1] This power was the Mogul Empire. Set up by Baber, an invader from the north-west in the time of Henry VIII., it had been consolidated and had reached its highest power under the great and wise Akbar, who was ruling the whole plain of the Ganges and the Indus from Agra in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The reigns of his successors, Jehangir and Shah Jehan, cover the period with which we are now concerned; and under these princes the splendour of the Mogul power, especially in art and architecture, reached its acme. Shah Jehan, contemporary with Charles I., was building, in the Taj Mahal and the Pearl Mosque at Agra, and in the lovely marble palaces of Delhi, some of the noblest and most beautiful buildings in the world. In the presence of a power of this kind the European adventurers had to behave themselves. James I. sent an ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, to the court of Jehangir in 1615, to ask with all due courtesy that trading privileges should be granted to the English. The Great Mogul replied at first that the Portuguese controlled the European trade; as India had no sea-power, he evidently did not want to meddle. But when the Portuguese failed to drive away the persistent English interlopers, the Mogul readily allowed the new-comers to

[1] See the map of India in this period, Atlas, Plate 59 (*a*).

establish factories—which, of course, in carrying on their trade had to show due respect to the laws and authorities of the country.

Thus the English had to overcome Portuguese opposition before they could trade freely with India. Though they were not allowed to attack the Portuguese (since peace had been made in 1604), they did not recognise the right of the Portuguese to exclude them, and were ready to defend themselves when attacked. The struggle with the Portuguese was at its height during the ten years before 1622, when the struggle with the Dutch farther east was also raging; after that the Portuguese left the English alone, and the two nations even co-operated against the Dutch. In 1612 Captain Thomas Best, with only two trading ships of the East India Company, and in 1614 Captain Nicholas Downton, with only four ships, had to resist fierce attacks by overwhelming Portuguese naval forces, off the town of Surat—the main port on the West Coast for the trade of Northern India, from which the Portuguese were determined to exclude them. In both cases they won resounding and amazing victories, which so raised the prestige of the English, and so usefully backed up the solicitations of Sir Thomas Roe, that in the year 1616 the East India Company was allowed to open a 'factory' at Surat. English prestige was still further raised when, at the request of the local sultan, the English traders in 1622 drove the Portuguese out of Ormuz, a strong place at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, which they had held since the time of Albuquerque.

The factory at Surat, the first secure English foothold on the coast of India, was only a hired house: a quadrangle with a central courtyard and a surrounding compound or garden. In its upper story the President and his assistants lived, while the lower was used as a warehouse, where goods for export to England were slowly accumulated till the ships arrived, and the cargoes they brought were sold by auction to Indian merchants. Surat long remained the principal centre of English trade in India. But others were established during this period. In 1632, after some years of sharp rivalry with the Dutch, a factory was started at Masulipatam, on the east coast. In the next year a modest beginning was made at the mouth of the Hooghly river. This was the beginning of the English connexion with Bengal; and in 1650 a more permanent factory was planted higher up the river, at the town of Hooghly. Meanwhile

in 1639 the Company had been permitted by a local raja to buy an area of land on the south-east coast, and to erect upon it not only a factory but a fort. It was called Fort St. George; and it was to grow into the city of Madras. Thus the English were fairly planted, though only as modest traders, at the three points from which their influence was to extend over India—the west coast, Madras and Bengal.

The agents whom the Company sent out to manage these factories, and the dependent collecting stations up country, were paid almost nominal salaries—far too low to support any Englishman so far from home. This was partly because the Company's resources were small. But there was a better reason. The agents were appointed on the understanding that they would supplement their salaries by carrying on local trade on their own account; they had plenty of time to do so during the long intervals between the visits of the ships. When these traders obtained political power, this practice was to have disastrous results. But so long as they were under the control of strong Indian governments, it did no harm to anybody. Indeed, it was (in appearance at any rate) advantageous to everybody concerned. It encouraged private enterprise, and enlisted it in the service of a common aim. Here again, individual enterprise is the distinctive English note; with its virtues, and also its defects. Such were the modest beginnings of the momentous connexion between the islands of the west and the ancient realm of India. The Company suffered some set-backs, and was sometimes in low water, during the first fifty years of its existence. But during all the period of parliamentary conflict in England the Indian trade was steadily going on, and steadily enriching the country. It was enriching India also; for the interchange of goods is beneficial to both sides.

§ 3. *Colonising Activities in the West: Canada, Virginia and New England.*

In the West, as well as in the East, the supremacy of the Dutch seemed during this period to be overwhelming. Their powerful and strongly supported Company of the West Indies (founded 1621) controlled all the Dutch activities in the North and South Atlantic.[1] They founded trading settlements in Guiana; they occupied, among other islands, Curaçoa, from which a lucrative smuggling

[1] See the maps, Atlas, Plates 53 and 58 (*a*).

trade could be carried on with the Spanish Main; they brought slaves from West Africa; their ships dominated all these waters, carrying the greater part of the trade even of the English and French settlements. Above all they made a vigorous attack upon the rich Portuguese territory in Brazil, a large part of which they held for thirty years (1624-54). But their aim was always trade, not settlement. Though they established in 1624-6, under the name of the New Netherlands,[1] a plantation at the mouth of the Hudson—the best centre for trade on the east coast of North America, as the subsequent growth of New York has shown—its main purpose was to carry on a fur trade with the Red Indians: the settlers were for long few in number, and (like those of Cape Colony), they were never allowed the rights of self-government.

Meanwhile the French and the English were engaged upon enterprises in North America which, though they were at the moment far less dazzling and lucrative than those of the Dutch, were to lead to far greater results.

The first object of the ambition of both peoples was the lucrative traffic of the West Indies and the Spanish Main.[2] Here the wild and lawless traditions of the previous age naturally had a great influence, and much of the activity of the French and English, as also of many Dutchmen, was devoted to mere piracy. For two centuries to come West Indian waters were haunted by pirates. They made their headquarters upon the numerous islands which the Spaniards had left unoccupied, notably the island of Tortuga, which commanded one of the passages followed by ships coming from Central America to Europe. The pirates were known as 'buccaneers,' from the French *boucanes*, the wood-fires at which they dried their stores of meat, or as 'freebooters,' from the Dutch *vliebooten*, the flying boats which were the terror of peaceful navigators.

But alongside of piracy went settlement, especially among the English, in the little islands which the Spaniards had neglected. The French harmoniously divided the little island of St. Christopher with their English comrades in 1628, and occupied the fine islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe (1635); but the great period of French activity in the West Indies did not come till the next age. The English threw themselves with far greater zeal into the

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 54 (*c*).
[2] See the map, Atlas, Plate 53 (*a*) and (*b*).

planting of West Indian Islands, especially when they found that these lands could produce tobacco, sugar and cotton, which fetched very high prices at home. Government, which, though it desired peace with Spain, never recognised the right of the Spaniards to exclude Englishmen from unoccupied lands, supported this movement by granting charters to a number of small companies founded for the purpose of island plantations. The most important of the English islands in this period was Barbados (settled in 1624), which almost from the outset enjoyed great prosperity. But there were also settlements in the little Leeward Islands—at St. Christopher (1623), Nevis (1628), Barbuda (1628), Antigua (1632) and Montserrat (1632); there was a plantation in Honduras (1638); and there were unsuccessful attempts to plant settlements on the coast of South America. It was one of these attempts, organised by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1617, and aimed mainly at the acquisition of the legendary gold mines of Eldorado, which led to the execution of that survivor of the Elizabethan age.

In the English West Indian settlements there was one remarkable feature which distinguished them from the settlements of all other nations. The settlers brought out with them the habits of local self-government, ingrained in them by centuries of practice at home; and they seem almost everywhere to have set up elected bodies to share in the management of local affairs. We do not know when a representative body was first set up in Barbados, but in 1652 the Barbadians stated that government by a governor, a council and an assembly was 'the ancient and usual custom here'; and there are many other instances of the same thing. The note of local self-government was a feature of the English settlements from the outset, even in the slave-worked West India Islands, which lived in constant danger of Spanish attacks.

But it was on the mainland of North America that the men of this age did the greatest work—the work that was to lead to greatest results.[1] Here the main part was played by the English and the French, who entered at almost exactly the same moment upon the task of planting colonies in these almost empty lands. The work of both is of equal concern to us; for while the English settlements were to fix the main characteristics of English colonisation, and were ultimately to develop into the mighty American republic, the French settlements were, after long conflicts,

[1] See the map of the colonisation of North America, Atlas, Plate 54.

to pass under British rule, and to become part of the British Commonwealth.

Ever since the daring explorations of Cartier (1534-6), who had discovered the wide estuary of the St. Lawrence, and, pursuing it in the hope that he had found the north-west passage, had pushed his way as far as Montreal and given the name of Canada [1] to the country which he had discovered, the French had regarded this land as peculiarly theirs. They had made several unsuccessful attempts to plant settlements in it. But in 1603 an expedition, which included the great explorer Samuel Champlain, renewed Cartier's discoveries, and in the next year a settlement was made at Port Royal, in Acadia (Nova Scotia). In 1608 Champlain returned with yet another expedition, and planted a trading-post on the high rocky bluff overlooking the St. Lawrence at Quebec.

Champlain's work was mainly that of mapping out the country.[2] In 1609 he explored, to the south, the beautiful lake which still bears his name: but this voyage brought him into conflict with the fierce Indian tribes of the Iroquois, who inhabited the northern part of what is now the State of New York. They were henceforth to be the relentless enemies of the French. In 1613-15 Champlain made his way up the Ottawa, through trackless forests inhabited only by scattered Indian tribes, then by Lake Nipissing to Lake Huron, and across to the eastern end of Lake Ontario. Here he again came into conflict with the Iroquois, whose homelands he had now reached. This was one of the most gallant feats of exploration in the early history of North America, far surpassing any similar achievement of the English; and it struck at the outset the note of romantic daring which was to mark the whole history of French Canada.

Though a valuable trade in furs sprang up from the first, there were for a long time few French settlers in this uninviting land of forests and fierce savages. A new company, founded in 1627 under royal patronage, tried to stimulate emigration. But there was only a thin fringe of settlements along the shore of the river near Quebec: little *seigneuries*, where emigrant gentlemen maintained fortified stockades for the protection of their handful of cultivating

[1] Canada comes from Kannata, the Indian word for a collection of huts, which was given to Cartier as the name of a place where he landed; he supposed it to be the name of the country.

[2] See the map, Atlas, Plate 54.

tenants. The few settlers devoted themselves rather to the adventurous and profitable enterprises of trapping fur-bearing animals in the forests and trading with the Indians, than to cultivation. The noblest exploits of the period were those of the Jesuit missionaries, who went far afield among the wild savages, and settled themselves down to convert them to Christianity: they had a great success among the comparatively peaceful Huron tribe, on the eastern shores of the lake of that name.

But the infant colony had to face extreme difficulties. In the first place it was threatened by the relentless enmity of the Iroquois, the best organised and the most warlike of the Indian tribes, who had made themselves more terrible by learning the use of fire-arms, which they purchased from the Dutch traders on the Hudson. The Iroquois exterminated the friendly Hurons, and murdered several of the missionaries with hideous tortures which were heroically endured. They mastered all the tribes in the neighbourhood of the infant colony. They raided the settlement year after year, and every settler in French Canada lived in constant terror of the Iroquois war-whoop. When in 1642 the French planted a new settlement at Montreal, it had many hairbreadth escapes from destruction; in 1660 it was only saved by the deathless valour of seventeen French heroes, who at the cost of their lives defended a palisaded enclosure at the Long Sault on the Ottawa river, against incredible odds. That was the end of twenty years of the Iroquois terror. The settlers had also to deal with English enmity: during the foolish war of Charles I. with France, an English fleet seized Quebec; it was held from 1629 to 1632, when it was handed back. This was the beginning of a long conflict. In face of all these difficulties, it is not surprising that French Canada made very little progress, and was, at the end of the period, not to be compared for numbers and wealth with the English settlements farther south. But it had established a wonderful tradition of courage and daring; an atmosphere of romance hangs over it; and better days were soon to dawn.

Meanwhile in the south the English had, in a haphazard and unregulated way, been planting settlements quite unlike any that had yet been made by any of the European peoples.

In 1606, in the hope of renewing with more success the old projects of Sir Walter Raleigh, two Virginia companies were founded with royal charters, to plant settlements re-

spectively to the south and to the north of the 41st degree of north latitude. The northern company, which came to be known as the Plymouth Company, never did anything of importance. But the southern company, backed by a number of London merchants and public men, sent out a party of emigrants who, on 16th April 1607, reached land at the southern point of Chesapeake Bay, and on 13th May gave the name of Jamestown, in honour of the king, to the first permanent English settlement on the American continent.

During its first years the new settlement had a troublous time. The emigrants were of an unsatisfactory type, restless and disappointed when they found no gold. The mortality among them was very heavy. The Indians, unwisely handled, became hostile; and the colony was perhaps only saved from extinction by the energy of the romantic adventurer, Captain John Smith.[1] But from about 1612 the colony began to look up. The settlers had lighted upon a rich and fertile country where communication was made easy by a network of navigable waterways. They soon found that the soil was well suited for growing tobacco, which at an early date became their staple product and was even used instead of money. Though current opinion (which King James himself expounded in a treatise) regarded tobacco-smoking as a dirty and immoral habit, the pleasant vice rapidly grew in Europe; and Virginia, like the West Indies, profited. The new colony was largely settled by means of grants of land to Englishmen of the country gentleman class, who brought out sons of their fathers' tenantry to cultivate their lands. There were comparatively few independent emigrants of the poorer classes, because the passage cost about £20—equivalent to at least £100 of our money; such men came mainly as 'indentured servants,' selling their services for a number of years to cover the cost of the passage. Criminals and other undesirables were also sent out; after serving for a period under forced labour, they drifted into the class which came to be known as the 'mean whites.' As tobacco could most cheaply be cultivated by slave-labour, negroes soon (1620) began to be imported, though their numbers remained small during this period. Already Virginia was assuming the character of an aristocratic settlement,

[1] John Smith's autobiography is full of stories of wild adventure, which may or may not be true; it is well worth reading. There is a reprint of Smith's *History of Virginia* in Rouse's English Classics.

where the chief citizens were large planters in great houses, surrounded by dependents and retainers.

The problem of managing the affairs of the first English colony led to some interesting experiments. At first the control was vested in the company, checked by a royal council. In 1619, however, the company's governor summoned a representative assembly of two members from each plantation and two from each county. Nobody took any objection to what seemed a natural and English mode of procedure; and thus the first English colony saw the establishment of the first representative assembly ever created outside of Europe. All the other colonies were to follow this example, as if by instinct. Self-government was in the bones of the English settlers; and its influence, by ensuring that local knowledge was considered, largely accounted for the colony's success. Very little attention was aroused by the meeting of this assembly, which was taken as a matter of course; but it was an event of fundamental importance in the history of the British Commonwealth because it indicated what was to be its future development. When, in 1624, the direct authority of the company was brought to an end, and the Crown became responsible for the appointment of the colonial governor, and, through him, for the executive government of the colony, Virginia attained the form of government which was to be characteristic of the English colonial system: an executive controlled by the Crown, and a legislature elected by the people.

The very quietness with which this system came into existence was significant. It implied that it was taken for granted that emigrant Englishmen carried with them to their new homes their 'inherited liberties,' including the right to be consulted, through their representatives, in the framing of the laws under which they lived, so far as these were variations from the accepted principles of the English Common Law. Throughout the great colonising period which was now opening, this doctrine was always regarded as almost an axiom. Thus in 1620, the very year after the first meeting of the Virginia Assembly, a similar body was summoned in the Bermudas; though these islands—made known by the shipwreck of Sir George Somers in 1608—had been first settled only in 1612, and had a mere handful of inhabitants in 1620.

But the fact that the emigrant Englishman carried with him the rights of self-government did not mean that he

ceased to be a member of the commonwealth from which he had sprung. On the contrary, his English citizenship was held to be the safeguard of his civil liberties. He still lived under English law, and was subject to the executive authority of the English Crown ; and none of the emigrants of this period, not even those who left England because they disapproved of the royal policy, ever wished to cut themselves off from the commonwealth, or to shake off their allegiance to the Crown. Hence every colonising enterprise, however independent, strove to regularise its position in the commonwealth by obtaining a charter from the Crown, or from its agents.

In 1620 a new field of colonial enterprise was opened by the establishment of the Council for New England, to take the place of the ineffective Plymouth Company of 1606. It was empowered both to initiate enterprises on its own account, and to make grants of land to others. Under the direction of its most enterprising member, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, several little settlements were made in the regions later known as Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

But the main work of settlement in these northern lands was to be due, not to the activity of the Council for New England, but to a new and potent factor, the factor of religious enthusiasm. In the very year in which the Council was founded, but without its assistance, the Pilgrim Fathers sailed for New England.

When it became plain that neither Elizabeth nor James I. was going to allow the English Church to be reconstituted on a thoroughly Puritan model, some groups of enthusiasts had begun to emigrate to Holland. One such group went as early as 1593. In 1606 another group, a whole congregation with their minister at their head, went to Holland from Scrooby in Lincolnshire. But they were not happy in Holland : too much laxity surrounded them, and they feared lest their children should cease to be Englishmen. They therefore negotiated with the London Virginia Company for permission to settle in its territory, which was given them ; and, after various mishaps and delays, the little pious company set sail from Plymouth (August 1620) in the historic *Mayflower*. The winds carried them not to warm Virginia, but to the inhospitable shores of Cape Cod, where they landed, and gave the name of Plymouth to their first settlement.[1] Fortunately the first winter was mild, and the Indians were friendly. But even so, the little company

[1] See the map of the early New England settlements, Atlas, Plate 54 (*b*).

of poor and humble folk suffered great hardships; and it was only by reason of their own staunchness and the wisdom of their elected governor, William Bradford, that the tiny settlement took root. The London partners who had financed it were bought out; and the small congregation of the faithful were left undisturbed to manage their own affairs. The basis of their organisation was naturally that of their church; the free citizens were the church members; and the church, standing in the centre of their stockaded enclosure, was their fort as well as their sanctuary.

The modest settlement at Plymouth continued to maintain its distinct existence until, at the end of the century, it was merged in its later and greater neighbour, Massachusetts. It enjoyed no marked prosperity, and showed no vigour in expansion. Its inoffensive people were left undisturbed in the enjoyment of their complete autonomy. Yet, though they had left England to make a Bible Commonwealth of their own, they regarded themselves still as Englishmen and subjects of the English Crown; they accepted English law; and, like every other group of colonists, prided themselves upon their enjoyment of the rights and privileges of Englishmen.

But, obscure and humble as they were, the Pilgrim Fathers had started a new era in colonisation. They had marked out the path which, before many years had passed, was to be followed by a remarkable stream of emigrants. This emigration was the direct outcome of the conflict over political and religious questions which had already begun in England while the first colonies were being planted; and to this conflict, which was to exercise the most profound influence upon the character and development of the whole commonwealth, we must next turn.

[Payne's *European Colonies* gives a good general sketch, though now somewhat out of date; a better and more recent account is given in Abbott's *Expansion of Europe*. Doyle's *English in America* (3 vols.) is the best English book on the period; G. L. Beer's *Origins of the British Colonial System* and Egerton's *British Colonial Policy* are books of the highest value on their subjects; W. L. Grant's *History of Canada* is a well-written short book; Parkman's *Pioneers of France in the New World*, and *The Jesuits in North America* are brilliant and vivid books on the early history of Canada; Channing's *History of the United States* gives the results of modern scholarship; Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America* (8 vols.) is a condensed repository and bibliography for all the American settlements of all nations; Hunter's *British India* gives a spirited account of early conflicts in India.]

CHAPTER III

THE CONFLICT OF CROWN AND PARLIAMENT

(A.D. 1603-1629)

James I. and VI., 1603 : Charles I., 1625.

§ 1. *The General Grounds of Conflict.*

JAMES VI. of Scotland, bullied by his nobles and the ministers of the Kirk, and always short of money, had long watched with envy, across the border, the wealth and undisputed power of Elizabeth, whose legitimate heir he was. He was a man of intelligence and learning, widely read in theology, and he possessed a sound theoretical grasp of European politics. Vain, timid, self-important, good-natured, unbusinesslike and pedantic, he would have done better as a professor than as a king. He was much influenced by the fashionable doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. When he succeeded to the thrones of England and Ireland in 1603, he hoped at last to enjoy the unrestricted authority which in his view a king ought to possess. But from the outset he found himself faced by difficulties.

In the first place, religious parties were troublesome. James, like Elizabeth, was willing enough to leave men a great deal of freedom, provided that the control of the Crown through the bishops over the Church was not weakened or challenged ; but he had no intention of giving way either to the Catholics or to the Puritans, both of whom appeared to challenge royal authority, Catholics by asserting the papal supremacy, Puritans by desiring a popular element in Church government. Yet both parties hoped, at the beginning of the reign, that the change from Elizabeth's régime might be favourable to them.

In the first months of the reign some Catholics were mixed up in an obscure and foolish plot to seize the king. It came to nothing ; and after its failure a handful of the more desperate Catholics formed a conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament on 5th November 1605. The discovery of this Gunpowder Plot, and of a whiskered

desperado romantically surrounded by barrels of gunpowder in a cellar, aroused an excitement altogether out of proportion to its importance: ridiculously enough, its anniversary was regularly celebrated by small boys until quite recently. It increased the eagerness of Parliament to deal more severely with Catholics. James deserves credit for having resisted, but his resistance aggravated his difficulties with Parliament.

On the other hand, the Puritans in a very largely signed petition demanded a revision of the practices of the Church of England. James went further than Elizabeth had ever done, by calling and presiding over a conference between the bishops and the Puritan leaders at Hampton Court (1604). But no material concession was made to them; the king made it plain that in his view the authority of the Crown would be endangered by any weakening of the power of the bishops —'No Bishop, No King,' was his motto. The only important result of the Hampton Court Conference—but it was a great one—was that a new translation of the Bible by a committee of learned clergy was set on foot. Its outcome was the noble Authorised Version, published in 1611, which has been one of the greatest factors in moulding the character of the British peoples. Soon after the conference the Convocation of the Church drew up a series of canons or rules, designed for the purpose of giving a flat negative to the more extreme Puritan demands; and the enforcement of these led a number of Puritan clergy to resign their livings. The refusal of the king and the bishops to make any concession to the Puritans made yet another subject of complaint in Parliament.

In the second place, the king's foreign policy, which as we have already seen aimed at making friends with Spain and at maintaining peace in Europe, was always attended with difficulties. He made, as we have seen, a peace with Spain in 1604, but it was an unsatisfactory peace, and things did not go as he wanted them. On the one hand Spain never understood or sympathised with the real aim of his policy. On the other hand there was always a strong war party even at court, and the Puritans in Parliament were generally eager for a Protestant war, and resented what they regarded as James' subservience to Spain. Foreign policy was always a ground of difference between king and Parliament. Parliament had a wholly misleading idea that Elizabeth had played the part of a Protestant heroine, whereas her policy had always been guided by national

and not by religious motives. The king, on his side, resented acutely any criticism of or interference in foreign affairs, which, like Elizabeth, he regarded as peculiarly his province.

In the third place, there was a difference of long standing, now beginning to be acute, between two groups of lawyers and two sets of law courts. The courts which were more directly under the influence of the king and the Privy Council, such as the Star Chamber, the High Commission Court for Church matters, and even the older Court of Chancery, wielded a jurisdiction which was undefined in its extent, and used methods of procedure widely different from those of the ordinary common-law courts. The lawyers who practised in the special courts were inclined to emphasise the royal prerogative, to argue (what was historically true) that all courts emanated from the king as the source of justice, and to maintain that his authority was ultimately unlimited. On the other hand, the lawyers of the common-law were inclined to assert that they were the guardians of the ultimate and fundamental law of the land, the *lex terræ* of Magna Carta [1]; that this law was above the king, and could not be altered by him or by anyone; and that any procedure of other courts which came in conflict with it was invalid. The great exponent of this view was Sir Edward Coke, a deeply learned man. Carried to its logical extreme, the common-law view would have sentenced England to an unchanging and unprogressive system. But it implied the vital principle of the supremacy of law even over the Crown. The disputes about jurisdiction between rival sets of law courts may seem petty matters. But they had great influence upon the development of the controversy between Crown and Parliament, which turned mainly upon legal precedents; and though they did not, until a later date, arouse much attention, much lay behind them.

In the fourth place, the king was a Scotsman, and this meant that he lacked the instinctive sympathy with English points of view which was possessed by such peculiarly English sovereigns as Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. The antipathies created by three centuries of war between the two nations were kept alive by English irritation at the number of Scotsmen who naturally followed their king to England, and at the favour shown to them. James was

[1] This was, of course, a misinterpretation of the term; see above, Book I. chap. v. p. 65.

eager to bring about a real union between England and Scotland, and his eagerness is much to his credit. But Parliament did not share it; and, despite all his efforts, James could get nothing more than a decision—given by the law courts, not by Parliament—that all Scots born after the date of his accession to the English throne had the rights of English subjects in England (Case of the *Post-nati*, 1607).

Lastly—and this was perhaps as important as anything—in spite of the growing prosperity of England, the English government was in financial straits. Elizabeth, for all her frugality, accumulated a heavy debt during her later years, and by large sales of Crown lands she had reduced the permanent revenue of the Crown. This meant that recourse had to be had to Parliament for relief; and Elizabeth's difficulties showed that even she, with all her popularity, found it hard to get adequate grants from Parliament. James' reckless extravagance added greatly to the difficulty. Ministers had to use every device known to the Tudors to raise money within the law, and some of these devices, though not without precedent, were open to challenge by Parliament. The result of this situation was that James was necessarily dependent upon Parliament, a position which he disliked. Later in the reign the remarkable growth of English trade relieved the situation, by bringing about a great increase in customs duties; and until war threatened at the end of the reign, Parliament could be dispensed with. But until then the king by Divine Right found himself in an irritating position of dependence.

It was these difficulties which at once gave to Parliament the opportunity for claiming an increase of power, and provided it with the grounds of attack upon the Crown. Parliament indeed had no intention of claiming new powers, and no idea that it was doing so. Its members honestly believed that they were defending 'the ancient inherited liberties of England.' They did not consciously desire any change: at the most they wished to revive liberties which had been temporarily disused, and they resented the charge of being 'innovators.' Yet innovators they were, for they were groping towards a new system of national government by co-operation, and a new view of the position of the Crown, which would make the king essentially only the first official of the nation. Though they based all their arguments upon precedents, they chose their pre-

cedents from the periods which suited them best, and read modern meanings into mediæval phrases. Sometimes their imperfect historical learning misled them; thus the authorities upon which they based their claims in the preamble to the Petition of Right included a quite incorrect version of Edward I.'s Confirmation of the Charters, and a statute which had never been passed. They constantly referred to Magna Carta with veneration as a sort of fundamental unalterable law, which it never was, and put into its clauses meanings which modern scholarship has shown that they never possessed.

In the battle of precedents the weight of authority was on the whole more favourable to the contentions of the Crown than to those of Parliament on most of the questions at issue. For the Crown also rested upon precedent; and, largely as James I. and Charles I. talked about Divine Right, they never actually did anything that was not capable of a strong, or at least a plausible, legal justification. Kings by Divine Right were, in their view, responsible only to God for the way in which they exercised their powers; they were not mere officials responsible to the nation; but that did not mean that they intended to override and defy definitions of their powers which had been accepted by their predecessors. Nevertheless, though it too rested upon precedents, the Crown, equally with Parliament, was unconsciously aiming at a great change in the system of government. Divine Right monarchy was quite as inconsistent as the ideas of the Parliamentarians with the old feudal order from which both drew their precedents.

The insistence upon precedents in all the coming discussions is very characteristic of England. It implied a real respect for Law as such, and ensured that advance should be cautious and in touch with tradition. But it tended to conceal the fact that the struggle was a real conflict of principles, a conflict between two ideas of national government, both new and both undefined, of which one expressed a doctrine widely current at the time, while the other was peculiar to England. The Crown was the spokesman of one of these principles, Parliament the spokesman of the other. The whole future of the Commonwealth depended upon the outcome of this debate.

It is a blunder to think of this great but hazy controversy as a conflict between the people and the king. There were advocates of both views in the nation, and if it had been conceivable that the issue should be clearly defined

and put to a popular vote, the vote would probably have gone in favour of the king's view. It is equally a blunder to think of Parliament as a democratic body, coming to Westminster with 'mandates' from large constituencies. One half of Parliament was the House of Lords, consisting of hereditary peers and of bishops nominated by the king; and, though it contained men who favoured the Commons in the conflict, the House of Lords was on the whole inclined to take the king's side. Even the House of Commons, which was the active party in the conflict, must be thought of primarily as an assembly of country gentlemen, and of lawyers drawn from the same social class, with a mere sprinkling of merchants from London and a few other trading towns. The ninety-two knights of the shire, who formed the most dignified element in the House of Commons, were required by law to be 'gentlemen born,' a term which had at that date a perfectly definite meaning; they were all wealthy squires. The representatives of the boroughs, who numbered nearly four hundred, might have been expected to speak rather for the trading classes. If they had done so, the trading interest would have been grossly over-represented. But in fact it was not so. Very many of the boroughs were tiny places, little more than villages, often clustered round the park-gates of some rural magnate. The right of voting in them varied greatly, according to local custom, but was only in a few places widely distributed. There were no newspapers to disseminate rival 'programmes,' and no elaborate electioneering. In most cases the boroughs were glad to nominate two of the gentlemen of their neighbourhood, or to accept their recommendations. The House of Commons was thus in effect drawn from among the most active and public-spirited members of a single class, that of the country gentlemen, blended with members of a single profession, that of law, which was mainly recruited from the same class. But the country gentlemen were the most politically active class in England, the best educated, and the most experienced in the work of administration. They were the natural and accepted leaders of the most important section of the community. Better than any other class, they could, at this date, speak for the nation, though their opinions, as expressed in Parliament, were probably in advance of those of the greater part of the nation, which had indeed no very definite opinions at all.

§ 2. *James I. and his Parliaments.*

Such an assembly was difficult to deal with; it could neither be browbeaten nor corrupted; and King James, and his son after him, not only quarrelled with every Parliament which they summoned, but found each more troublesome and exacting than the last. James' first Parliament, which had four sessions between 1604 and 1611, was relatively amenable. But in its first session it made trouble because disputed elections had been referred to the Court of Chancery, and successfully insisted that it must settle all such questions itself; it complained of the treatment of Puritans and of undue leniency to Catholics; it dealt most unwillingly with the king's favourite project of a union with Scotland, and in the end hung it up indefinitely; it attacked the privileges granted to trading companies; it refused to come to an agreement on a proposal to commute the king's feudal dues for a fixed annual payment—in itself a not unreasonable reform; and, though it voted some money to the king, gave a quite inadequate sum, and insisted upon having its grievances redressed before it would give any more.

Above all, in its last session it raised a great storm over the question of 'impositions,' or additional import duties, about which there was to be immense controversy in the future. Import duties had always formed a large part of the royal revenues. The old traditional customs duties, under the name of tonnage and poundage, were habitually granted to each king for life by the first Parliament of his reign, but many lawyers held that they belonged to the king in any case, apart from parliamentary grants. Naturally the rates charged needed to be revised from time to time, especially when new commodities became important; and the Crown had frequently exercised the right either of imposing new duties or revising the old ones. In 1606 a London merchant, Bate, had refused to pay a duty on currants on the ground that it was not part of the ancient customs, but the judgment of the courts had gone against him. In 1608 the Lord Treasurer, Cecil, issued a revised *Book of Rates*, in which many changes were made. This was what raised the storm about impositions, the Commons claiming that no duties over and above the ancient ones covered by tonnage and poundage could be levied without their consent. Precedent was in favour of the king. But there could be no doubt about the danger of such a power,

especially now that foreign trade was attaining to an importance it had never reached earlier. The king might get from this source enough to make him independent of Parliament. There was a stormy debate (1610), but no settlement was reached, and the question remained undecided for thirty years. It afforded an illustration of the insufficiency of precedents as a foundation for political liberty.

The first Parliament had been unsatisfactory; the second was worse. It was summoned in 1614 because the financial outlook was black. The king tried to influence the elections beforehand, but that only brought a storm upon his head. The Commons declined to discuss grants until they had discussed grievances; and, after much noise and fury, the 'Addled' Parliament was dissolved with nothing done.

Seven years passed before a third Parliament was summoned in 1621: the interval was possible because of the steadily improved yield of customs duties, and this naturally did not make Parliament, when it did meet, more yielding on the subject of impositions. In the meanwhile many things which displeased Parliament had happened. Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, had become ominously influential at court; a royal favourite, Carr, Earl of Somerset, had dazzled and disgusted England with his lavishness, and had been ruined by the foul atmosphere of divorce and poison-mysteries with which he surrounded himself; a second and more brilliant favourite, Villiers, Earl of Buckingham, was in the ascendent; Sir Walter Raleigh, last of the Elizabethans, had been executed, so men said, on the demand of Spain; and above all, the Thirty Years' War had broken out, and Protestantism was in danger. Parliament was in no forthcoming humour when it met in 1621. What is more, it now had a group of tried and tested leaders. One of these, just emerging, was John Pym. Another was the great lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, who had been Chief Justice, but had been dismissed by the king for his persistent opposition to the prerogative courts, and the great lawyer was eager to renew the strife in a new arena.

Parliament made a totally inadequate grant for an expedition to relieve the Palatinate. But it gave its main attention to the redress of grievances. It took up the old question of monopolies, which James had been granting on a large scale; and, not content with a bill against monopolies, resolved to punish Sir Giles Mompesson, a connexion of Buckingham's, who had flagrantly abused patents granted

to him. For that purpose the Commons revived the old practice of 'impeaching' the offender before the House of Lords, which had been invented in Edward III.'s time,[1] but long since disused. The revival of impeachment provided the Commons with a very formidable weapon, a legal process by which they could, on behalf of the nation, bring to trial before the House of Lords agents of government who misused their power. Mompesson forestalled condemnation by flight to the Continent.

But the weapon was soon to be used against higher game —no less a man than Sir Francis Bacon, now Lord Chancellor, who was charged with corruption in the exercise of his judicial functions. Bacon had undoubtedly been guilty of irregularities in taking gifts from parties to cases. But it is probable that his real offence lay deeper. He had been the defender of the prerogative courts against Sir Edward Coke and the common-lawyers. He was found guilty and crushingly punished: his public life was at an end (1621). And the House of Commons realised that it possessed, in impeachment, a very powerful and effective means of calling to account the agents of government.

Later, when asked to vote more money to help the Elector Palatine, the Commons drafted a petition demanding greater severity against the Catholics, and protesting against the king's Spanish policy. This was to touch the king in his tenderest spots: religious policy and foreign policy being in his view (as in Elizabeth's) his very peculiar prerogatives. But when he rebuked the Commons for trenching on his prerogatives (as Elizabeth had also done), they replied by entering upon their journals a solemn protest to the effect that all affairs concerning king and realm and church were proper subjects of counsel and debate in Parliament. Here, in truth, a great issue was raised. There was to be no question of national policy reserved for the king's sole discretion: no subject not liable to review and criticism by Parliament. James sent for the journals and tore out the offending passages with his own hands. But you cannot mend the weather by smashing the barometer. Parliament was first prorogued and then dissolved, without having made provision for the Palatinate; and three of its members, including old Sir Edward Coke, were sent to the Tower.

If he could, James would have had no further parliaments. But the breach with Spain, which came in 1624, made grants

[1] See above, Book II. chap. vii. p. 151.

of money necessary; moreover it might be hoped that the war with Spain, so often demanded by the Commons, would be popular. A new Parliament, therefore, was called for 1624. It included, besides the old leaders, two great men: the eloquent, generous, enthusiastic Cornish knight, Sir John Eliot, an impassioned lover of what he believed to be the tradition of English liberty; and the deeply learned historical and legal scholar, John Selden. In this Parliament Buckingham tried to make an alliance with the popular party, on the strength of the part he had played in breaking with Spain. He succeeded in getting a substantial grant, though only half of what was needed. But it was given on the significant condition that treasurers appointed by Parliament should control the money, and only issue it for the purpose for which it had been voted. Moreover this Parliament imitated its predecessor by impeaching a great official—the Lord Treasurer Middlesex, who had done much to bring the finances into good order, but had also been guilty of irregularities. In this act the Commons were, it is true, hounded on by Buckingham, whom Middlesex had opposed in the matter of the Spanish War. But the great weapon of attack had been sharpened. When a Lord Chancellor and a Lord Treasurer had fallen before it, who was safe? The death of James, however, brought his fourth Parliament to a premature end, and the final grapple was postponed to the reign of his successor.

§ 3. *Charles I. and the Petition of Right.*

Charles I., a young and handsome prince, with many graces and every domestic virtue, ought to have been able to deal successfully with his parliaments at the opening of the reign, especially as he and his friend Buckingham had been at pains to cultivate the last Parliament, and were plunging into a popular war, and making ready to take part in a great coalition for the relief of the German Protestants. But Charles was at once proud and reticent, always under the influence of some more active mind, even more impatient of criticism than his father, and apt to be uncandid in dealing with opposition which he thought improper. Moreover Buckingham, to whom he entrusted the practical control of affairs, was a reckless and slapdash person, incapable of making sound plans or of sticking to any plans. The flagrantly incompetent conduct of the war gave to Parliament the best of excuses for interfering

in matters which it would not have ventured to touch under the Tudors. At the same time the refusal of the Commons to provide the funds wherewith the king could honour his obligations drove him to devices which laid him open to attack. After four years of unceasing and embittered conflict, and unbroken and humiliating failure abroad, Parliament had almost got to the point of claiming to control the conduct of government, a claim which it would never have dreamt of putting forward even ten years earlier ; and Charles, to maintain the royal authority, was reduced to the necessity of suddenly liquidating his continental obligations, and trying to get on without a Parliament or the funds that it alone could give.

Not the least of the reasons for the suspicion with which he was regarded by the Commons was that he had identified himself with a new party in the Church, which was now becoming aggressive. James I., though bent upon maintaining the authority of the bishops, and through them of the Crown, was himself a Calvinist in doctrine, as were most of his prelates. But during the later years of his reign—those years in which the influence of Charles and his friend Buckingham was dominant—a new school of thought had been rising into vogue. In doctrine it was Arminian, repudiating the characteristic Calvinist doctrine of predestination. It laid less stress than the Puritans on preaching, and more on ceremonial. It refused to accept the exclusive emphasis which the Puritans laid upon the Bible, and held that the traditional usages and festivals of the Church ought to be binding when not inconsistent with Scripture. This school of thought, which had never been absent throughout the English reformation, but was now stronger and more earnest than ever, may be called the Anglo-Catholic party. Its ablest living representative was William Laud, Bishop of St. David's, whom Charles I. made Bishop of London, and to whose advice he listened on all Church matters. Laud was a reformer, like the Puritans, and desired to remodel the English Church after his own mind. And he and his school, as was natural, were friends of the monarchy which supported them, and advocates of the doctrine of Divine Right.

When Charles' first Parliament met, in June 1625, they voted only £140,000 for the expenses of a war upon which the king had pledged himself to spend at least £700,000 a year. At the same time they introduced an alarming innovation. The duties known as tonnage and poundage

(which formed an essential part of the revenue) by custom had to be granted to the Crown by the first Parliament of the reign. They had been granted to every successive king for life; but this Parliament proposed to grant them for one year only, as a security against being dismissed. Then they proceeded to deal with religious matters, demanding greater strictness towards Catholics, and condemning in set terms a treatise by a leading Anglo-Catholic, whom they committed to the sergeant-at-arms. The king promptly appointed him a royal chaplain. Later, in response to an earnest appeal for money to carry out the national obligations, the Commons returned an evasive reply, and proceeded to make a violent attack upon Buckingham and the king's other advisers. Charles lost patience and dissolved the Parliament, when it had sat for less than two months, and before it had even had time to pass the Tonnage and Poundage Act.

Six months later (1626), his financial straits compelled him to summon another Parliament. In the meantime a disastrous expedition to Cadiz had discredited England abroad; English ships had been promised to France to crush the Protestants of La Rochelle, whose revolt was preventing France from giving help in Germany; and the unhappy King of Denmark was pressing for his promised subsidies. Desperate for money, Charles had tried to raise a compulsory loan. When Parliament met, the first act of the Commons was to appoint a committee of grievances and to demand an inquiry into the mismanagement of the war. A direct attack was opened against Buckingham; and no grants of the direly needed money were even to be discussed until grievances were redressed. Even in the Lords Buckingham was bitterly attacked; while the Commons proceeded to draw up crushing articles of impeachment against him. This was in effect an assertion of the responsibility of ministers to Parliament. When Sir John Eliot opened the impeachment before the Lords, he compared Buckingham to Sejanus, the tool of the tyrant Tiberius. For this insult Eliot was sent to the Tower. The Commons declined to transact business until he was released, and the king had to release him. Then the business which the Commons did condescend to transact was a protest that all payments of tonnage and poundage (which the Crown had been collecting in spite of the failure to pass the Act) were illegal without their consent; and refused to grant any money till Buckingham was dismissed. Threatened

with the loss of a large proportion of his already wholly insufficient revenue, and with the ruin of his dearest friend, Charles dissolved this Parliament also, after only four months. He had not received a penny; and he and the country were dishonoured in the eyes of the world. Badly as the war had been mismanaged, it is not surprising that Charles felt he was unfairly used.

Money he must have. He continued to levy tonnage and poundage: indeed, suddenly to drop all the customs duties would have caused confusion in trade. He tried, through the justices of the peace, to get the country to pay as a free gift what it would have paid if a subsidy had been granted, but the result was small. He levied money on the maritime counties for the provision of ships: this had often been done before, and the money came in. He mortgaged Crown lands. Finally, he resolved to exact as a forced loan what he could not get as a parliamentary grant or as a free gift. This was his nearest approach to formal illegality: the judges declined to declare it legal, and many people refused to pay. To compel them, gentlemen who refused payment were thrown into prison, humbler men were pressed for soldiers. Five knights, thus imprisoned, demanded a writ of *habeas corpus* in the King's Bench (1627). In answer to that writ, the cause of imprisonment ought to be shown by the gaoler. The only cause given by the king's representative was that the knights were imprisoned *per speciale mandatum regis*—by the king's special command; and they argued that for the safety of the realm there must reside in government a discretionary power of this kind, to be used in emergency. The argument had some plausibility; every existing government possessed and used such a power, and Elizabeth had often used it. But the known circumstances under which the five knights had been imprisoned—for refusing to subscribe to a forced loan which the judges would not declare legal—did not add to its cogency.

Meanwhile everything was going wrong with the war. Denmark, lacking the promised help, was crushed, and the German Protestants were at the mercy of the Catholics; a mad war with France had been added to the war with Spain, and the Duke of Buckingham had led a fleet and an army to disaster on the isle of Ré (1626). It was in these circumstances that the king, more desperate for money than ever, had to meet his third Parliament (March 1628).

The Commons felt that the crisis was grave. Their

leaders decided that the impeachment of Buckingham had best be dropped, since far deeper issues had been raised than any mere personal controversy. Unparliamentary taxation—arbitrary imprisonment: if these were allowed to establish themselves, English liberty was as good as dead. The sovereignty of law must be enforced: the rights of the representative house must be maintained. These were the supreme duties of this Parliament, which must take precedence of all money grants. They drew up a grave and weighty statement of the breaches of law which had recently taken place, and of the prescriptive and inviolable rights of Englishmen which, in their view, these acts had infringed. This document, known as the Petition of Right (1628), has always ranked next to Magna Carta among the bulwarks of English liberty. It deserves to rank higher, for it marks a far clearer definition and a far greater advance than Magna Carta. It declared the unlawfulness of any 'gift, loan, benevolence, tax or suchlike charge,' without parliamentary grant. These words, it is true, did not expressly mention customs duties, and the indefiniteness left room for further dispute. But they ruled out, at any rate, every form of direct taxation. It declared the imprisonment of any man without cause shown to be illegal: the cause must be shown in answer to a writ of *habeas corpus*. There were other clauses. But these were the essential points. They left the personal liberty of the subject, and the control of taxation by Parliament, more clearly defined than they had ever been before.

The Lords agreed to the demands embodied in this great document. The king struggled to avoid formally accepting it. He offered a carefully drafted statement, asserting his obligation to maintain the laws and customs of the realm *as well as* his own prerogative. That would not satisfy. He had to bow his proud head: *soit droit fait comme est desiré*.

But the Commons were not content with this great victory. They proceeded to attack divines who had exalted the royal prerogative. They impeached Roger Manwaring, who had preached that parliamentary assent was not necessary for taxation, and whose sermons had been licensed by the king. They drew up a remonstrance demanding the removal of the Duke of Buckingham. In a second session (1629) they raised once more the question of tonnage and poundage, and were proceeding to attack Laud and others of his school, when the king ordered an

adjournment. Thereupon the doors of the House were locked; and the Speaker was forcibly held down in his chair while articles were read and passed, protesting against the innovations in religion and the collection of tonnage and poundage.

The king replied by dissolving the House, and issued a public declaration, wherein he complained (not wholly without reason) that Parliament had first induced him to go to war and then traded on his necessities. Finally he imprisoned nine members of the House of Commons, including their great leader, Sir John Eliot. It was not easy to reconcile this with the Petition of Right, so recently accepted. Eliot died in prison two years later; and two of his companions were not released till 1640.

So ended the first great phase of the conflict. It had led to one important achievement, the Petition of Right. But it had also shown the House of Commons aspiring to something like control of the executive government, and had caused many men to ask whether efficient government would be possible if an assembly so large and variable had it in its power to make government at any moment impossible. One man who was inclined to share this view was Sir Thomas Wentworth,[1] a great squire of Yorkshire, who had played one of the leading parts in the opposition to Buckingham, and even in the drafting of the Petition of Right. To overthrow an incompetent minister was one thing; to make government impossible was another. He had helped in both. But he was a lover of efficiency, of what he called 'Thorough.' The murder of Buckingham (1628) had removed the chief cause of inefficiency and made a better system possible. Parliament had no clear ideas as to the kind of system it would desire to establish. Conscious of his own ability, Wentworth was persuaded to enter the service of the king, and prepared to help him to make government efficient, and to do without Parliament. To this day men quarrel as to whether Wentworth deserved to be called an apostate; or whether his action was due to a change of view such as may suddenly come to a man or a nation when they begin to realise what is the inevitable goal of the path on which they have set their feet.

Helped by Wentworth and by Laud, Charles I. entered upon an experiment in government, the aim of which was to show that, without overriding or disregarding the laws

[1] There is a short life of Wentworth (Strafford) by H. D. Traill in the English Men of Action Series.

of the land, monarchy, when freed from vexatious and unreasonable parliamentary criticism, could give to the people orderly peace, prosperity and happiness. In England, to all outward seeming, the experiment long appeared to be wholly successful, though, as we shall see, the movement of emigration to the New World afforded an evidence of dissatisfaction which ought not to have been lightly regarded. In Ireland also the system of 'Thorough' seemed to be triumphantly successful, though in reality it prepared great troubles for the future. But in Scotland the government of Charles I. and Laud aroused such passionate resistance, such an outburst of national feeling, that the whole experiment broke down; and England also, after an interval of calm, found herself suddenly drawn into the throes of revolution. To Ireland and to Scotland, therefore, we must next turn; for their history had now become vital in the development of the Commonwealth.

[A very readable account of the period will be found in G. M. Trevelyan's *England under the Stuarts*, a more detailed treatment in F. C. Montague's *England from the Accession of James I. to the Restoration*. The period is covered by S. R. Gardiner's monumental *History of England from 1603 to 1642* (10 vols.), which is the standard authority; also by Ranke's *History of England, principally in the seventeenth century*, and by Hallam's *Constitutional History*. Gardiner's *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* is valuable, and has a good introduction; the reign of James I. is covered by Prothero's *Constitutional Documents*. There is a shorter and very good account in Gardiner's *Puritan Revolution* (Epochs of Modern History). Lord Acton has a lecture on the Puritan Revolution in his Lectures on Modern History.]

CHAPTER IV

IRELAND AND SCOTLAND UNDER THE EARLY STEWARTS

(A.D. 1603-1640)

§ 1. *Ireland: the Plantation of Ulster.*

At the very moment of James I.'s accession the surrender of the Earl of Tyrone, who had raised so great a rebellion at the end of Elizabeth's reign, had ended the long and painful process of the conquest of Ireland. The authority of the Crown was recognised throughout the country, and it was now possible to organise an orderly and peaceful system. If English law had been justly and firmly administered, if Irish proprietors of land had been made to feel that they were secure in their possessions, and encouraged to develop them under the protection of the law, and if a reasonable toleration had been allowed to the Catholic majority, Ireland might still have been reconciled to the destruction of the old tribal system, which indeed had meant unceasing anarchy; and even the bitter memories of the Elizabethan conquest might have been gradually obliterated. It was not too late to make a new start, and in Ireland at any rate the coming of the new dynasty might have proved itself a blessing.

A good beginning was made. A general pardon was issued. The head of the O'Donnells was created Earl of Tyrconnell (Donegal). Tyrone was left in possession of his lands. Sir Arthur Chichester, whom James sent to Ireland as Deputy in 1604, was a just man and something of a statesman, who saw that reconciliation was needed, and tried to attain it. English law was successfully established, and the judges on circuit seem even to have been welcomed as protectors of the weak. Moreover the Catholics had a surcease of persecution.

But the bad traditions of the last age were still too strong. On the one hand, too many Englishmen had learnt to believe that the dispossession of Irish landowners and their replacement by English colonists was the only way to settle

the country; and their greed for easily gotten lands added strength to this idea. On the other hand, the Irish chieftains found it hard to reconcile themselves to the loss of their old authority, or to recognise those who had been their vassals as independent landowners. These fears might have died down if the fear of fresh confiscations and 'plantations' like that of Munster had not always haunted them.

A quarrel between the reconciled Tyrone and one of his former vassals brought on a new crisis. The question was to have been referred to the king. But instead of going to England, Tyrone—suspecting, with or without reason, that he would be arrested if he went—fled the country (1607), never to return, in company with the chiefs of the O'Donnells and of the Maguires of Fermanagh. There was obscure talk of a plot for a new rising to be backed by Spain, with which Tyrone may or may not have been associated. Anyway, his lands and those of the other fugitives were declared confiscated. Claimants to the succession, disappointed in their demands, broke out in a brief insurrection; and this provided the occasion for a wholesale confiscation of all the lands in six counties and for a scheme of plantation on a bigger scale than anything that had gone before—the plantation of Ulster, 1608. Every owner in the six counties was dispossessed; and huge allotments were made in the old method—the city of London being granted the whole of the county of Coleraine and the town of Derry, to which the name of Londonderry was henceforward assigned. As before, many of the grantees failed to fulfil the conditions of their grants, and there was wholesale corruption and land-jobbing.

But into the plantation of Ulster came an element which had never taken part in any earlier plantation. Because the King of England and Ireland was now also King of Scotland, many Scots came over and took lands from the original grantees. They brought with them the dour industry they had learnt in a barren land where hard work was necessary for livelihood, and very soon they began to prosper. They brought with them also the Scottish form of Protestantism; and in that part of Ireland where the cruel policy of plantation was most successfully carried out, it was not the English but the Scottish mode of life and religious belief that was established. The fortunes of the three nations were thus intertwined on the unhappy soil of Ireland.

The plantation of Ulster was followed later in the reign

of James I. by other plantations, carried out with equal disregard of justice, in Wexford, Longford, and other districts. The policy of reconciliation had been abandoned before it had been fairly started. These plantations uprooted any hope there might have been that the Irish community would settle down with a sense of security. And the experience of Ulster, and the knowledge that other plantations were designed, led to what may almost be described as the beginning of parliamentary opposition in Ireland.

It is characteristic of the curious fondness of the British mind for seeking legality even as a cover for injustice that James I., much as he disliked parliaments, decided in 1611 to summon the Irish Parliament for the purpose of confirming what had been done in Ulster. At the same time it was intended to introduce new laws against the Catholics. The Irish Parliament, since the Elizabethan conquest, included representatives from all parts of the country. But in order to ensure a Protestant majority, James decided to create no less than thirty-nine new parliamentary boroughs, whose electoral rights were to be exercised by purely Protestant corporations. This plain attempt to pack the house led to a protest from the nobles of the Pale against the creation of corporations which 'could tend to naught else but that penal laws should be imposed upon your subjects.' When the Parliament met in 1613, the Catholics in both houses seceded and refused to do any business unless they were allowed to send a deputation to lay their grievances before the king. James, shrewdly observing that petitions were better than rebellions, appointed a commission of inquiry; and although it made no very satisfactory report, the intended persecuting Act was dropped, and parliamentary action had been proved to have some utility. In the next session Parliament granted a subsidy, and was rewarded by being allowed to pass Acts removing all legal distinctions between the races in Ireland, and withdrawing the prohibition of intermarriage between Irish and Scots. This might have been the beginning of a better era, but that was not to be. It was at any rate the beginning of a constitutional opposition, in Ireland as in the other parts of the islands, against the high-handed and unenlightened policy of government.

Early in Charles I.'s reign there seemed to have arrived a yet better opportunity for reconciliation. With wars against France and Spain on his hands, and no funds forth-

coming from his English Parliament, Charles was anxious both to keep Ireland quiet, and if possible to get money from it—without a Parliament, if that could be managed. In 1626, therefore, he instructed the Lord Deputy, Lord Falkland, to sound the nobility and gentry as to whether they would pay for the upkeep of an army if he granted them certain concessions, which came to be known as the 'graces.' Fines for non-attendance at church were to be dropped. The oath of supremacy on taking office was to be modified to suit Catholics. Above all, possession of land for sixty years was to constitute an indefeasible title, thus barring future confiscations and plantations. After some discussion, a grant of £40,000 per annum was agreed upon, the bargain to be subsequently ratified by Parliament. On these lines settlement and good feeling were possible.

But the Parliament which was to have ratified the agreement was postponed from year to year, and meanwhile the Lord Deputy began so flagrant a prosecution of the Byrnes in Wicklow, with a view to dispossessing them for a new plantation, that the old distrust was aroused. A golden opportunity for conciliation had been lost.

§ 2. *The Irish Policy of Wentworth.*

In 1632 Charles sent to Ireland the ablest man who had yet taken a hand in its government—the former parliamentary leader Wentworth; and his rule forms a critical era in the vexed history of the country. Wentworth's primary aim, as is made plain by his correspondence with his friend Laud, was to turn Ireland into a stronghold of royal power, no longer a weakness as it had been in the past, but a source from which the king might draw troops and even money for his needs elsewhere. He was intelligent enough to see that one essential means of doing this was to make the country prosperous and contented. He did much in that direction during his brief tenure of office, illustrating that efficiency in government to which he gave the name of 'Thorough.' He gave the closest attention to the development of the linen industry, which rapidly became a source of wealth to Ireland. He made a commercial treaty with Spain for the encouragement of Irish fisheries. He improved the breed of cattle, and insisted on a free export of hides and tallow, which had long been staples of Irish trade. He was at pains to preserve forests.

He brought in experts to look for minerals. On all the economic side of his policy, he did great good to Ireland, which under his rule began to enjoy a prosperity she had never known before. At the same time the maintenance of order and the administration of justice to ordinary men were firmly enforced, though Wentworth was guilty of gross injustice to individuals. Great use was made of the Court of Castle Chamber in Dublin, a court formed on the analogy of Star Chamber in England. Yet in the Ireland of Charles I. a prerogative court of this kind was less objectionable than in England: it might have served a purpose as good as Star Chamber had served under Henry VII.

But the broad features of Wentworth's policy were disfigured by all the old unhappy characteristics. In the first place he did much to confirm the belief that the pledges of the English government were not to be trusted. At a Parliament summoned in 1634—the first at which the tacit bargain on the 'graces' of 1626 could be carried into effect—he insisted that the king's needs must first be met before the subjects' grievances could be redressed; but having got a handsome grant of subsidies on the expectation that the 'graces' would be confirmed, he proceeded to grant only those of them which in his view were not inconsistent with the royal prerogative. Among those omitted was the all-important promise that possession for sixty years should constitute a title to lands. He prided himself upon the skill of this trickery: he had got a handsome price without delivering the goods. But dishonour never pays; the Irish gentry, ready to be reconciled, not only felt that they had been defrauded, but were convinced that the English government could not be trusted.

Moreover Wentworth now went on to prepare for the most iniquitous of all the plantations, which could only be carried out by a disregard of what every Irishman regarded as the pledged word of the king, for which a price had been paid. He intended to carry out a plantation of Connaught, the only province as yet untouched; to prepare for it he set on foot a series of inquiries into the titles of existing landholders in which the longest possession counted for nothing. Every one knew what the result would be. The plantation was never carried out, because the outbreak of war in Scotland and the summons of Parliament in England brought the proceedings to a close. But when the crisis came, Ireland, which was to have been the king's bulwark, was alienated and angry.

Finally, Wentworth encouraged a vicious attack upon the Puritans of the North, the most numerous and convinced section of the Irish Protestants, who were obnoxious because they shared the views of their obstinate Scottish compatriots. Suffering from this persecution, they, equally with the Catholics, were ready to repudiate the king's government. When the great crisis in the fortunes of all the islands was suddenly brought to a head by the successful resistance of the Scots, Ireland, like England and Scotland, was ripe for revolution.

§ 3. *Scotland: the Absolutism of James I.*

We have seen in an earlier chapter [1] that no country in Europe had been more profoundly changed by the Reformation than Scotland. Not only had it aroused among the Scottish people a deep interest in theological questions, and (except in parts of the Highlands), a passionate hatred of Rome; it had also intensified national feeling, and created, in the governing bodies of the Church, a national organisation. The series of representative bodies which the Presbyterian system established—kirk sessions for each parish, presbyteries for small areas, synods for provinces, and a General Assembly for the whole country—included laymen as well as clergymen, and formed a far more effective expression of the national mind than the feeble and unrepresentative Scottish Parliament. This democratic Church organisation had been tempted to take a hand in politics, and the leading ministers who spoke for it, like Andrew Melville, had bullied and for a time largely controlled the king. Thus the Scottish Crown found its power restricted, not only by its old enemies the nobles, but by a new and aggressive force.

But the nobles themselves, though they had unwillingly accepted it, did not like the democratic system of Presbyterianism, and were not unready to help in breaking its power. By playing off the Kirk and the nobles one against the other, the king seemed to have a chance of coming to his own again. Even before his accession to the English crown James VI. had used this chance with such cleverness that he might well be proud of his 'statecraft.' The strength which his new position gave to him enabled him to carry the process so far that he was able to boast to his English Parliament (as if giving them an example of what

[1] Book III. chap. vi.

he would do in England, if he could) : ' This I must say for Scotland, and may truly vaunt it : here I sit and govern it with my pen ; I write, and it is done ; and by a clerk of the Council I govern Scotland now—which others could not do by the sword.' Here was a plain warning. As a warning and an example the proceedings in Scotland had great influence in England, especially among the Puritans who sympathised with the Scottish system ; and the revolt which the policy of James and Charles produced in Scotland directly contributed to the final outburst of opposition in England.

By making use of the jealousy which the nobles felt for the Kirk James had in fact succeeded in establishing a complete royal control over the ordinary machinery of government. The Parliament, never effective or independent, except as an organ of baronial opposition, was reduced to a mere instrument of royal power. Borough members, appointed by the local magistrates, who were in their turn removable by the Crown, became in fact royal nominees. Representatives of the lesser barons (who alone voted in the counties) were similarly managed by the sheriffs. But an even more direct control than this was achieved. By ancient custom the business to be laid before a Scottish Parliament was drawn up by the Lords of the Articles, a committee of twenty-four, consisting of representatives from each of the Estates ; all bills were drafted by this committee, and were submitted and voted on *en bloc*—a procedure which reduced Parliament to a form. James had contrived to get the nomination of the Lords of the Articles practically into his own hand.

The actual conduct of administration fell to the Privy Council, a body whose powers in Scotland were even greater than those of the council in England ; it exercised legislative, executive and judicial powers at once. Earlier the Privy Council had been partly nominated by the Estates. James succeeded in acquiring the sole privilege of nominating every member of it ; and it was through the Privy Council that he governed Scotland, though of course some of the leading nobles had to be put on the council. Virtually the king was an absolute monarch in his northern realm, especially after his accession to England, when discontented parties could not get at him. He wielded his power from London ; after 1603 he paid only one visit to Scotland, and it lasted only eleven weeks. And it must be noted that in one respect at least he used his power well. He brought to

an end the turbulence and disorder of the Border country; he even reduced within limits the anarchy of the Highlands. One of his measures for this end was the proscription of the robber clan MacGregor.

The only check on the power of the Crown was in fact to be found in the representative bodies of the Kirk, and especially in the General Assembly, which was supposed to meet once a year, and which could not be easily disregarded. To complete his mastery of Scotland, therefore, James had to get rid of the General Assembly. His aim was to replace its authority by bishops nominated by himself, as in the English system, which seemed to him the ideal form of Church government. But he had to set about this change warily, because the Scottish people were devoted to their system.

Even before his accession to the English crown he had obtained from the Scottish Parliament (1600) the right to nominate bishops, who should sit in Parliament as representatives of the estate of the Church, and thus entitle Parliament to speak on Church matters, which it had scarcely been able to do since the disappearance of the old bishops. But the new bishops were only parish clergymen, and had as yet no ecclesiastical authority over their neighbours. At the same time James did his best to avoid meetings of the General Assembly. He allowed no meeting from 1603 to 1610, and, when in 1604 some ministers insisted on meeting, he had them prosecuted and convicted of high treason, though he did not venture to execute them. In 1606 he got an Act empowering him to endow his bishops with Church lands in possession of the Crown; and in 1610 he allowed a carefully packed Assembly to meet at Glasgow for the purpose of empowering the bishops to act as moderators (chairmen) of the provincial synods, and to ordain ministers. The General Assembly and the Synods were not abolished, though they were only to meet by permission of the Crown. The powers of the bishops were limited, and they had very small incomes, because most of the lands of their Roman predecessors were in the hands of the nobles. But the king had undoubtedly won a superficial victory: it was only superficial, because Scotland was still Presbyterian at heart, and deeply resented this tampering with its popular system of Church government.

But James was not yet satisfied. In 1616 he held an Assembly at Aberdeen, the most remote and least Presbyterian of Scottish towns, and got orders passed for a new confession of faith and a new form of public service. But

when he propounded five articles which he proposed to have enacted, providing for such matters as kneeling at communion, and confirmation, even the bishops urged that it would not be safe. The articles were adopted at a later Assembly at Perth (1618), but only by the votes of the bishops and the nobles. James had won another victory; but it was a victory more dangerous than a defeat.

§ 4. *The Revolt of the Scots against the Policy of Charles I.*

But even yet the Scottish Church was not assimilated to the English. That was left to Charles I., who took up the task of Anglicising the Scottish Church as a duty imposed upon him by God. But, having spent almost the whole of his youth in England, he had not that shrewd understanding of his Scottish subjects, or of the lengths to which it was safe to go with them, which his father had never lost.

During the first years of his reign he was too much occupied with foreign wars and parliamentary disputes to visit Scotland. But even so, the trend of his policy made itself felt. He put no less than six of the Scottish bishops upon the Privy Council, to the exclusion of as many nobles. This naturally angered the nobles; they had been willing to aid James in setting up bishops to keep the Kirk in order, but if the bishops were to replace themselves it was another matter. Again, in order to find adequate endowments for the bishops, he announced the intention of revoking all grants of Church and Crown lands made since the beginning of Mary's reign, and of regaining for the Church the tithes which had largely passed into private hands: a compensation which fell far short of the value being paid to the actual possessors. The ultimate result of this was that the Church in Scotland, which had been more shamefully plundered by the nobles than any other Church, was placed in a sounder position than it had hitherto occupied, and this was true whether it was organised on an episcopal or a Presbyterian basis. But almost every landed family in Scotland was injuriously affected by the change. These two measures broke the alliance between the Crown and the nobles which had enabled James to establish his power; and made the nobles ready to throw themselves into opposition. And if the nobles and the Kirk united, they would be irresistible, unless the strength of England could be brought to bear upon them.

In 1633 Charles at last went to Edinburgh to be crowned. The full rites of the Church of England were followed in the coronation. To the horror of good Presbyterians, the bishops were dressed in full costume; there were candles, and an altar, and a crucifix—all sheer 'papistry,' in the eyes of rigid Scots. Two acts bearing on religion were at the same time forced through a packed Parliament—not without opposition: even the nobles drew up a protest, which Charles refused to accept. One of the Acts enforced the obnoxious Articles of Perth. The other required that all ministers should wear the surplice. Small matters, it might seem; but to nine Scots out of ten these were mere symbols of Rome. When Charles returned to England, he left a country convinced that he was the enemy of its faith. If Parliament had been sitting in England, there might—indeed, there would—have been some demonstration of sympathy with Scottish Puritanism in its troubles. But Parliament was in suspense, now and for seven years to come; the experiment of personal government was being tried, with apparent success, and England was prosperous and quiet. The Scots had to look to themselves. But their resistance was so effective that in a few years it not only baffled the king within Scotland itself, but brought the toilsomely built fabric of his power in England tumbling to the ground.

Guided by Laud, now Archbishop of Canterbury and his chief adviser, Charles set himself systematically to perfect the work of transforming the Scottish Church which he had begun in 1633. In 1634 he set up, by his own authority, and without consulting the Scottish Parliament or the General Assembly, a new High Commission Court, with far-reaching and inquisitorial powers, to enforce his will. In 1635, equally without consultation, he issued a large book of canons, by which the government and ritual of the Scottish Church were henceforth to be determined. Even James I. had always maintained at least the semblance of consulting the General Assembly, or the Parliament, or both. These disguises were now thrown aside. Moreover the contents of the canons amounted to a sweeping abrogation of the forms of worship instituted by John Knox, which had held their place through all the changes of recent years. Among other things the canons required the universal adoption of a liturgy which was not yet published, but which was promised for the following year. Royal autocracy could go no further.

The new liturgy, drawn up on the basis of the English prayer-book by a group of Scottish bishops, was universally attributed to Laud. It was fixed to be read for the first time on July 23, 1637, in the Church of St. Giles, Edinburgh, where Knox and Melville had often preached. Though all the dignitaries of Church and State were present, the attempt to read it produced a riot. The liturgy could not get a hearing in a single church in Edinburgh, and there was the same opposition in all parts of the country. Petitions poured in from all quarters, from parishes and presbyteries, from nobles and burgesses: Charles paid no regard to them. So high rose the tumult that in desperation the Scottish Privy Council agreed to the setting up of four 'Tables' or committees, representing the four classes of nobles, lairds, burgesses and ministers who had taken part in the petitions, in the hope that they would help to maintain order. When the four 'tables' agreed to establish a central 'table' consisting of representatives of each of them, the national resistance—for it was now no less—was equipped with a directing body. What is more, since the Privy Council found itself in practice impotent, the 'tables' rapidly became the only effective authority in the country. The Scots had shown themselves remarkably skilful in organising united resistance.

When the Tables sent to the king a supplication (Dec. 1637), asking for the recall of the canons and the liturgy and the removal of the bishops from the Privy Council, Charles' reply in a public proclamation was that the liturgy would not be withdrawn, that petitions against it were illegal, and that petitioners would be punished for treason. Such a pronouncement was of no avail against a united nation. The Tables proceeded to draw up a National Covenant, based upon a confession which had been drawn up in 1581 with the approval of the king's father, and full of denunciations of Rome. But to the confession was added an indictment of recent innovations and a solemn oath to defend true religion and the Crown. True religion, as the Scots conceived it, was in danger only from the Crown; the double allegiance could not be maintained.

The National Covenant was opened to public signature in Greyfriars' Church, Edinburgh. So great were the crowds who came to sign it that it had to be taken out to a flat tombstone in the churchyard. Men signed it weeping; some signed it with their own blood; the most moving scenes accompanied the ceremony not only in

Edinburgh but in every parish of Scotland. Against such a resolution of a united nation no resistance could avail, unless it were backed by overwhelming force. And overwhelming force Charles could not wield, without appealing to the English Parliament for money. He could only temporise. He sent the Marquis of Hamilton to represent him: 'I give you leave to flatter them with what hopes you will . . . your chief end being how to save time . . . until I be ready to suppress them.'

The demand of the Tables now was for the summons of a free Assembly and a free Parliament to regularise their hitherto unconstitutional proceedings. The more important of these was the General Assembly, since it was the more completely representative of the nation, and supreme in Church matters by law. After much wriggling Charles had to yield with a bad grace, and to permit a General Assembly to meet at Glasgow on November 21, 1638; only safeguarding himself by declaring the illegality of all its proceedings unless the bishops were present—they had all fled in dismay to England, save four who had recanted.

The General Assembly of Glasgow deserves to rank among the great assemblies of the world; for it began a revolution which only ended with the establishment of the doctrine of popular sovereignty in the islands, and consequently in the whole British Commonwealth, and ultimately throughout the world. It was the most democratic and the most representative national body which had ever yet met. In every Scottish parish the minister and one lay elder were elected to the Presbytery; and from every Presbytery three ministers and a lay elder were sent to sit in the Assembly. The ministers were the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the nation; the lay elders included the ablest and best men of all the educated classes. To defy the decisions of such a body was dangerous indeed.

They were bold and unflinching decisions. First of all, the bishops were indicted. By the king's orders they refused to appear or to recognise the jurisdiction of an Assembly in which they did not sit as members; and on this ground, when the Assembly asserted that as a legally constituted body it had a right to judge the bishops, the king's commissioner, Hamilton, declared it dissolved. But no attention was paid to the dissolution: the Assembly went on with its task. It abolished episcopacy. It abolished the Court of High Commission. It abolished the canons and the liturgy; and then, in one compre-

hensive act, it re-established the whole Presbyterian system, its kirk sessions in each parish, its presbyteries, its synods, its General Assembly; and ordained that schools should be set up in every parish at the public expense. 'We have cast down the walls of Jericho,' said the Moderator in his closing words; 'Let him that rebuildeth beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite.'

Against such a defiance there could be only one reply. The issue must be decided by arms, and both sides prepared for this event. But Charles had before him the task of subjugating a united and enthusiastic nation; a nation, moreover, which had a very competent government of its own, well obeyed everywhere. Charles had to scrape together an army as best he might, from trained bands of militia and pressed men, and he had no skilled captains to rely upon. The Scots carried out a general levy, which was responded to with enthusiasm. They were able to put its organisation in the hands of experienced soldiers who had been serving abroad, chief among them Alexander Leslie, a general of Gustavus Adolphus, who held the rank of field-marshal in Sweden. It was a well-disciplined and well-supplied army which took the field to meet Charles' disorderly and untrained troops. Had they fought a pitched battle, there could be no doubt of the result. The Covenanters took the principal castles with little difficulty. But the clash of arms never came. The Scottish leaders were eager for reconciliation; the king wanted time for a stronger blow; and a truce made at Berwick (June 1639) ended the First Bishops' War.

This was no solution of the problem: a second Bishops' War was bound to follow. But in the meantime, in order to equip himself with the means of fighting, Charles had been compelled, after eleven years, to meet the English Parliament once more; and from that moment the fortunes of the two kingdoms, and of Ireland as well, were so irrevocably intertwined, that the separate narrative of Scottish events must be here suspended. The Scots had compelled the raising in definite terms of the greatest issue of government that had yet been fought out in any of the nations of the world.

[There is no good history of Ireland in the seventeenth century; see R. Dunlop's articles in the Cambridge Modern History, Richey's *Short History of the Irish People*, and C. L. Falkiner, *Illustrations of Irish History in the Seventeenth Century*. For Scotland, Hume Brown's and Andrew Lang's *Histories of Scotland*.]

CHAPTER V

PERSONAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS DOWNFALL

(A.D. 1629-1642)

§ 1. *The Years of Personal Government.*

In the eyes of the king, and of many others, the conduct of the Petition of Right Parliament, especially in its second session, following on the conduct of its predecessors, seemed to show that efficient government and the maintenance of national honour could not be upheld in face of unceasing and often unreasonable parliamentary criticism. Charles therefore determined to carry on the government as long as possible without Parliament; and as this involved abstention from costly adventures, he patched up hasty treaties of peace with France in 1629 and with Spain in 1630, and gave up the attempt to afford direct assistance to the German Protestants. The Duke of Buckingham, who had for some years past been the evil genius of Charles and his father, had been assassinated at Portsmouth (Aug. 1628) by a half-mad lieutenant in the army, and the field was clear for a fresh start. Henceforth the king was his own chief minister, though he was deeply influenced by the ideas both of Laud and of Wentworth. During eleven years he had the opportunity of showing England what the character and effects of monarchical rule would be. He had no fixed intention of disregarding or overriding established laws, and he always strove to get legal authority for his acts. But circumstances forced him into measures which, at the very least, strained the meaning of the law in its accepted interpretation: his own arbitrary temper and impatience of contradiction led him on; and his chief councillors, the masterful Wentworth and the doctrinaire Laud, were not the best advisers. His principles of government were in truth fundamentally inconsistent with the idea of a 'limited' monarchy, submitting to the sovereignty of laws which it could not alter; and as this was the conception of the ill-defined English tradition which

most Englishmen accepted, the result was that he gradually alienated all the most powerful and reasonable elements in English life, and had to witness a bewilderingly sudden and complete collapse of the painfully reared fabric of his power as soon as the Scottish revolution forced him to throw himself upon English national feeling.

Yet during all these years (1629-1640) things seemed to be going favourably for the king. The country was peaceful and very prosperous. The steady development of trade with the West Indies, with India, and with the young American colonies was reflected in a great increase in the yield of the customs duties, which helped to relieve government from financial embarrassment; industry was stimulated by the demand for goods for export, and by the growing wealth and purchasing power of the country; agriculture too was thriving, and great reclamations of marshland in the Fen country, carried out with the king's help, added to the food supply. Wages, it is true, were low; but apart from this England had never known a more steady or a more widely diffused prosperity; and the burden of taxation was less than in any other country. The coming revolution was certainly not due to economic distress, or to any economic causes.

Still less was it due to 'oppression' or injustice felt by the people at large. The ordinary course of justice went on in the ordinary way. There were no rebellions or public disorders. The events of the period which fill the pages of the history books were mainly constitutional and ecclesiastical questions, fought out in the law courts. They seemed to arouse no widespread popular interest or opposition; and if some of the punishments inflicted upon extreme fanatics were cruelly severe, they were very few in number, and not so severe as the punishments which had been frequently inflicted in Elizabeth's time, and still more in Henry VIII.'s. No man lost his life for his opinions, as many had done in Elizabeth's reign. Apart from the irritation which may have been aroused in some quarters by Laud's zeal for external uniformity in Church matters, the ordinary life of the people was almost unaffected by the proceedings of government, and no excitement seems to have been caused by them, except among the more extreme Puritans, a small minority of the nation. What *was* caused by them was serious-minded discussion of the tendency of royal policy in Church and State, in a multitude of country houses and merchants' parlours. Charles

might reasonably feel that he was succeeding. What he failed to appreciate was a deep change which had long been taking place in the mind and temper of the most important sections of the nation.

It was a change which had been gradually coming about since the later years of Elizabeth. The mere existence of the nation, which had then seemed to be imperilled, was safe; and therefore the passion and thrill of national feeling which that danger had aroused, the eager and adventurous spirit to which it had given rise, and the intoxicating sense of triumph which followed victory were being replaced by a more sober and reflective mood. You can see one aspect of this change in the contrast between the exultant daring of the Elizabethan sea-dogs, and the more businesslike enterprises of the traders and colonists which we have already described. Another aspect is displayed in the literature of the time. The great dramatic literature, full of passion and the pride of life, which was the glory of Elizabeth's time, lasted on through the reign of James I. with not much diminished brilliance. Then, almost suddenly, it came to an end. It did not merely change its style or form: it came to an end, and there is scarcely a parallel in literature to the existence of an outburst so brilliant creating no continuous tradition. In its place came a period of reflective poetry, and of philosophic prose, deeply concerned about the problems of life and conduct. As always happens, the one movement began before the other ended, and the change of note was already visible (for example) in the restrained and grave beauty of Shakespeare's last plays, the *Winter's Tale*, the *Tempest* and *Cymbeline*. The characteristic poets of the next period were men like Donne, George Herbert, Crashaw, Cowley, Milton and Andrew Marvell. They had not lost the love of beauty—they would not be poets if they had. But theirs was a graver and more austere delight; there is in such a poem as *L'Allegro* nothing of that fierce passion for colour and form, that drunkenness with fine words, which you find in Shakespeare's early poems. Even the writers of delicate love poems share the note: the man who wrote 'I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more,' was a Cavalier lyrist. And the same change in temper might equally be illustrated from manners and costume. Dignity and a sober richness are the characteristics that strike one, whether in the painted portraits of Vandyke (who got much patronage in England) or in the

written character studies like Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson's beautiful and endearing description of her husband.[1]

This reflective, sober, self-restrained temper was deeply exercised by great problems of government and religion. It was a law-abiding temper, not ready for hot-headed revolt. In the sphere of politics it expressed itself in a remarkable development of historical learning, devoted especially to the study of the antiquities of English institutions, and in the extraordinary reverence for precedents displayed by the parliaments of the age. But it was especially in religious questions that the new spirit was exhibited. This was the age not merely of Puritanism at its best, but of much noble and beautiful thinking and writing upon the other, or Anglo-Catholic, side of the great controversy. Most of the poets named above were of the Anglo-Catholic school. They found in the Anglican way a real *via media* between extremes on either hand, a mode of retaining beauty and dignity, and of reconciling freedom with order. William Laud, though in some of his methods he went beyond what the best minds of his party would have desired, did nevertheless speak for a real and powerful body of honest thought and feeling.

But undeniably the dominant thought of the time was Puritan. All England had been reading the Bible in the noble Authorised Version, and very many Englishmen were ready to find in it an all-sufficient rule of life, apt to be obscured by insistence upon traditions and ceremonies. This does not mean that the majority of Englishmen were enamoured of the more extreme Puritan theories, that they wished to abolish bishops, sweep away the prayer-book, and carry out the religious change with the logical thoroughness of their Scottish neighbours. That school of thought had indeed a considerable following, especially in London and the towns, from which it always drew its main strength; but it was a small minority in the nation. What is meant by the assertion that the dominant thought of the time was Puritan is that there was a widespread and growing impatience with many of the proceedings of the bishops and with the emphasis which prelates of the Laudian school seemed to lay upon forms and ceremonies; that there was a desire to encourage the preaching of good doctrine, and anger at the closing of the mouths of preachers; and that there was a growing gravity of life, a tendency to disapprove the

[1] *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson* a book which gives a picture of the Puritan spirit at its best.

gaieties and recklessness in which the Elizabethans rejoiced. This, as much as anything, accounts for the decay of the drama; though few of the more respectable Puritans would have endorsed the reckless and foul-mouthed imprecations against all plays and players in which fanatics like Prynne indulged.

The essence of Puritanism consists in the sense of direct and personal responsibility to an austere God: in the belief that a man's duty is to live 'as ever in his great Task-master's eye.' And when such a view of life becomes widespread in a nation, as it was widespread in seventeenth-century England, very great results are apt to follow. There may be long restraint, long hesitation about helping to produce a disturbance of settled order; but when the time comes there will be unbending severity. For this, it should be remembered, was not an age in which toleration was accounted anything but a weakness, though in some quarters the spirit of tolerance was beginning to raise its head. Most of the Puritans were anything but tolerant: to be indulgent to wrong in any form, wrong thinking equally with wrong action, was in their eyes a crime. And there was one form of 'error' for which toleration was specially unthinkable. The fierce hatred of Rome, which descended from the days of national peril, was even stronger than ever. Nothing so much discredited Charles and the bishops as the suspicion that they were inclined to be lenient to Rome.

Unconscious, as it was natural that he should be, of these deeper currents of national life, Charles had every ground to be pleased with the external evidences of order, prosperity and content which lasted throughout his period of personal government. During these years the country was almost in the happy condition of having no history; and it is only in the light of after events that the working of the causes which prepared the coming catastrophe is perceptible. From this point of view three groups of events deserve attention. One was the ecclesiastical policy of Laud, and the mode in which it was carried out. The second was the remarkable movement of emigration to the New World, which was the answer of Puritanism to Laud, and in which, during these years, Puritanism found its chief expression. The third was the financial expedients to which the king was reduced, and the constitutional issues raised by them. These three distinct series of events were all closely connected. They combined to prepare placid and law-abiding

England to play its part in the revolution which was meanwhile brewing in Ireland and in Scotland.

§ 2. *The Aims and Methods of Laud.*

William Laud,[1] fifty-two years old and Bishop of London at the beginning of the period, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, and was not only the king's chief adviser in Church matters, but one of the principal members of the Privy Council, an advocate of the highest view of the royal prerogative, and the king's most trusted friend. He was not in the strict sense a persecutor; he held no inquisitions into men's consciences as the Puritans did in Scotland and America, and the Catholics in many countries. But he was the head of one party in the Church, and that probably not the most widely supported in the country, though it counted now the larger part of the clergy among its adherents. He did not punish men for holding Puritanical opinions, otherwise than by denying them preferment. But on three points he held strong views, and took strong action to maintain them. He was determined to maintain the authority of the bishops and the royal supremacy over the Church; he was eager to introduce external uniformity in Church services; and, like all other statesmen of that age, he believed in restraining public discussion of vexed questions, especially by those with whom he did not agree, or who challenged, and by challenging endangered, the existing order in Church and State. He had immense industry and perseverance, an instinct for order, and a genuine zeal for his work. Nobody ever suggested, even in the bitter controversy of that age, that he was not absolutely above corruption. But he had a high temper and an overbearing manner, and did not easily brook contradiction.

He carried out a very thorough visitation of the churches, and insisted upon the observance of his rules of order. There was some opposition, but very little, and he got his way. Perhaps the point upon which there was most complaint was his demand that the communion-table should be placed at the east end of the church, and not in the centre, where the congregation often used it as a convenient place for their hats. The enforcement of this rule cannot be called severe persecution. More serious, he refused to permit the appointment as preachers of parsons not holding benefices,

[1] There is a good short biography of Laud, by W. H. Hutton.

according to a practice very common in London and other Puritan towns, where Puritan preachers, denied preferment, were often appointed to Sunday afternoon lectureships. He took very seriously the censorship of the press, which had been a function of the Church since Elizabeth's time, and promised whipping and the pillory to any one but the few licensed printers who should venture to issue books in London. This was, of course, a grave interference with freedom of discussion. But it was quite in accordance with precedent and with the accepted view of government's duties. A similar course would have been followed by a Puritan ecclesiastic.

It was, however, the method in which his regulations were enforced which aroused most indignation. They were enforced through the High Commission Court and the Star Chamber, 'prerogative' courts which had descended from the Tudors. These courts, originally created for the purpose of making the royal authority effective, did not administer the ordinary law of the land: they enforced the executive edicts of the Crown; they largely used their own discretion both in their methods of procedure and in the penalties which they imposed. They had been useful under the Tudors as a means of dealing with offenders and offences before which the common law was ineffective; but the nation had now outgrown the need for them. It was in reality for that reason, and not because they were employed more unscrupulously than the Tudors had used them, that the new generation found them objectionable. Some of the penalties which these courts imposed were ferocious. William Prynne, an acrid Puritan lawyer, for a learned, virulent, foul-mouthed book against the stage, in which he reflected on the king and queen, was sentenced to pay a fine of £5000, to be set in the pillory, to have his ears cut off, and to be imprisoned for life; the same Prynne, together with a clergyman, Burton, and a doctor, Bastwick, later received a similar sentence; Alexander Leighton, for writing a furious book against bishops and against the king's policy, was fined £10,000, was set in the pillory, was whipped and had an ear cut off, and was then imprisoned for life. These were horrible sentences. But Tudor parallels could be found, and there were few cases so bad as these. It was right that such barbarities should be condemned and prevented for the future; but neither Laud nor the courts in which his influence was so great originated this kind of ferocity. The real objection at

the time to Laud's proceedings was that he was using his authority to forward a cause from which his critics differed; though it should be added that a growing sense of moderation and decency was leading men to condemn many things which had left them unmoved a generation or two earlier.

§ 3. *The Puritan Emigration.*

The ascendency of Laud and of the Anglo-Catholic party convinced the more fervid Puritans that they had now little chance of imposing their own austere conceptions of life upon the whole English community, or of turning England into a Bible Commonwealth such as they had dreamed of. The moment at which this conviction was forced upon them is pretty clearly marked. It was the moment when the Petition of Right Parliament was dissolved, after making a violent protest against the favours shown to the Laudian school. Those who wished to live in a Bible Commonwealth must now, it would seem, seek outside England the opportunity of realising their dreams. The successful establishment of the little colony at Plymouth pointed the way; and in 1629 a group of Puritan leaders resolved to imitate the Pilgrim Fathers, and to found a plantation on a larger scale wherein Puritan modes of life should be strictly observed. It cannot be said that these men were driven out by any severe persecution. They wished neither to be tolerated nor to tolerate. They were a loyal and law-abiding folk who wanted to live in a Bible Commonwealth where all would follow the same austere rules of life; and since they could not fashion England after their will, they went out to make a new society in the wilderness, still remaining loyal Englishmen and enjoying the rights and liberties of Englishmen.

In 1628 the Council for New England, on behalf of the king, had made a large grant of land to a company known as the Company of Massachusetts Bay. Like the Virginia Company before it, it was given by its charter large powers of government over settlers within its limits. Many of the subscribers to this company were Puritans; and this made it easy for the group of leading Puritans who were planning the creation of a Bible Commonwealth to get control over the company, and to use its chartered powers for their own purposes. As the leading members of the company themselves intended to settle in its territory, it was easy to transfer its administrative headquarters to the settlement itself; thus the forms of a trading company could be used

as the means of securing for the intended colony a remarkable degree of independence and of freedom from external control as well as a formal legal standing, to which the law-abiding Puritan attached great weight. The leading spirit in this remarkable enterprise was John Winthrop, a Suffolk squire, a lawyer and a Cambridge graduate, who became the first governor of the company and of the colony, and remained throughout his life its dominating figure. A man of great practical wisdom, he was also very much of an autocrat; and his aristocratic prejudices were almost as strong as his Puritan convictions.

In 1630 a fleet of eleven ships, carefully organised, took out some 2000 settlers, who established themselves in and around Boston—not without friction with some earlier settlers who had planted themselves in the same region. Though there were some hardships in the first year, the colony was successful from the first. No plantation had ever been so carefully organised; and supplies were abundant because the leaders of the expedition were men of substance and education, grave and solid men, not mere adventurers. During the following years there was a continuous stream of Puritan emigrants: in 1634, we are told, ten or twelve ships full of emigrants came into Boston every month. By 1642 (when the outbreak of the Civil War checked the stream) there were no less than 18,000 inhabitants in Massachusetts, a population greater than that of all the other American colonies combined; and this leaves out of account the settlers in the other Puritan colonies which, as we shall see, were being simultaneously founded. What is more, a very large proportion of the emigrants were men of substance, who were not driven from England by poverty, or by any other motive than religious zeal. At one moment Oliver Cromwell almost joined them; and Sir Harry Vane, Cromwell's later rival, actually dwelt for a time in the Bible Commonwealth.

This was a very striking exodus, which might have been regarded with alarm in England. At that period every government held that it had a right to control the movements of its subjects. But Charles I. placed no obstacles in the way of the Puritan emigration. One fleet bound for Boston was, indeed, held up for a time; but apart from this there was no interference. Charles was no doubt glad to be rid of troublesome folk. But at least his attitude was not that of a persecutor; it stands in marked contrast with the policy of Louis XIV., who would allow none but

orthodox Catholics to go to Canada. If Englishmen, whether Puritans or Laudians, had not yet learnt to regard religious freedom as desirable, at least the idea was coming to birth that within the same commonwealth, and under the same flag, there was room for communities of widely different types. To that extent Charles I. and Laud were ready for toleration. Winthrop himself was told by members of the Privy Council, 'that his Majesty did not intend to impose the ceremonies of the Church of England upon us; for that it was the freedom from such things that made people come over to us.'

From the first the new colony was not only prosperous, but was left extraordinarily free to manage its own affairs. It recognised the supremacy of the English Crown. It claimed to enjoy the inherited liberties of Englishmen, and enforced in its courts the Common Law of England. Its title to its lands was derived from a royal grant, and it recognised the territorial limits defined in its charter. Its government depended upon the powers granted by the charter, which continued in force down to the Revolution. Massachusetts was ruled by the 'Governor, Assistants and Freemen of the Massachusetts Bay Company.' At first these formed a close oligarchy; there were, to begin with, only twelve freemen, who exercised, in theory, absolute control over the rest. Other freemen were admitted only with the consent of the original group, which was sparingly given. In 1631 it was laid down that only members of approved churches were eligible as freemen; but this by no means meant that all church members were entitled to the freedom. The object of the provision was to ensure that the character of the Bible Commonwealth should not be disturbed. Nobody could describe early Massachusetts as a democracy. It was a strictly limited aristocracy. It represented that 'rule of the saints' which was later attempted in England; but the saints had to be of respectable station in life.

In local affairs there was a nearer approach to democracy. Each township, having its church as its centre, was governed by the free voices of all the church members. And gradually this system liberalised the central government of the colony: the practice came to be that all church members were entitled to be present, in person or by proxy, at the 'General Court,' wherein the freemen of the company elected its officers and laid down its rules. Out of this a representative system was to grow. But it had not yet

come into being during the period with which we are concerned; the colony was still governed by a small oligarchy. It was not as the model of a free state, but as the model of a Bible Commonwealth, that Massachusetts was to influence the course of the discussion in England.

In several respects the new Puritan colony was one of the best-ordered societies in the world. Its people were prosperous and enterprising; besides cultivating the soil, they soon began to take to fishing and trading. The colony enjoyed peace, being little troubled by the Indians, who were on the whole fairly treated. It was from the first an educated community: there was a school in every township, and in a very few years the beginnings of a University were made at Cambridge—so called in honour of the *alma mater* of most of the colonial leaders. The keen interest of the people in theological subjects made them (like the Scots) intellectually acute. But Massachusetts was a hard and intolerant community, very far indeed from being a centre of spiritual freedom. It had no love of freedom or variety: its view was that men ought to be compelled to live austerely according to a strait rule; and as it forbade freedom of thought, so it banned the levity of art and of joy. None but Puritans would dream of going to Massachusetts. Yet several groups of Puritans who went there were forced to flee into the wilderness, because they differed from the dominant creed; and when, at a later date, a handful of Quakers arrived in Boston, three of them, two men and a woman, were hanged.

Thus there was being erected in New England a model of the Puritan conception of a well-ordered state. Beyond question this community had strength, courage and ideals; it fostered and loved political, if not religious, freedom; and its establishment was an enrichment of the variety of the nascent commonwealth of free peoples.

Massachusetts and its modest older neighbour, Plymouth, did not long stand alone. In 1631 a group of leading English Puritans, including Lord Saye and Sele, Lord Brooke, John Hampden and John Pym, obtained from the Council for New England a vague but extensive grant of land south of Massachusetts, to which the first settlers went out in 1633. This was the beginning of the colony of Connecticut.[1] A group of voluntary exiles from Massachusetts later (1635) settled in the valley of the Connecticut

[1] See the map of New England, Atlas, Plate 54 (*b*).

river; and these two groups, without any formal authorisation from the Crown, set up a system of government for themselves. In 1638 another group of Puritan exiles from England established themselves at New Haven, on the Connecticut coast. They were perhaps the most rigid of the emigrants; and for a long time—indeed, until 1662—they held themselves aloof from the Connecticut settlements which surrounded them.

Meanwhile the intolerance of Massachusetts had driven some of its inhabitants to take refuge in the wilderness. Three distinct groups of these refugees found their way to Rhode Island and the adjoining shores of Narragansett Bay between 1636 and 1638; they combined to form the colony of Rhode Island, which, like Connecticut, was a 'squatter' colony, not authorised by any formal charter. From the first the most distinctive feature of Rhode Island was that, in accordance with the principles of Roger Williams, one of its founders, it refused to interfere with the religious opinions or practices of individual settlers; and for that reason it was regarded with distrust and dislike by the more orthodox Puritan colonies.

There had thus been created, before the acute conflict began in England, a remarkable group of thriving settlements in the block of land which lies between the Hudson and the Atlantic. The tiny original settlement of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth still maintained its distinct existence. Massachusetts was solidly organised, was growing rich and strong, and dominated its neighbours. Connecticut was fighting strenuously with the Indians and wiping out the Pequot tribe. New Haven was living apart in rigid orthodoxy. The outcasts of Rhode Island were raising the standard of religious freedom. Meanwhile, further north, small settlements had been established by Sir Ferdinando Gorges and the Council for New England, in New Hampshire and on the coast of Maine. In 1643 Massachusetts took the lead in organising a federation of this group of settlements, for common defence against the Dutch and the Indians. The federation lasted for some years; but it was never very effective, because the lesser colonies distrusted Massachusetts and feared her domination. But what was most significant about the federation was its omissions. Neither Maine nor Rhode Island was admitted. Rhode Island ('that sink') was unorthodox: 'we have no conversing with them, nor desire to have.' As for Maine, not only had that settlement admitted an

excommunicated minister; it had conferred office on a tailor, which outraged the pride of aristocratic Massachusetts. As in England, so in the New World, the various groups of Puritans did not find it easy to co-operate. Puritanism, just because of its vitality, was apt to be a disruptive creed.

The remarkable group of New England colonies was not the only achievement of the period of personal government. Roman Catholics were persecuted in England far more seriously than Puritans. In 1632 it occurred to a Roman Catholic peer, Lord Baltimore, to imitate the Puritans by finding in the New World a place of refuge for his co-religionists, where they could follow their own convictions without interference, while still remaining under the English flag. He obtained from Charles I. a grant of land on Chesapeake Bay, immediately to the north of Virginia, and gave to it the name of Maryland,[1] in honour of the queen (1632).

Maryland was the first 'proprietary' colony; its governor being appointed by the proprietor, subject to the king's approval, while the proprietor also had the right to dispose of lands. But the charter granted to Lord Baltimore by Charles I. provided that no laws should be passed without the assent of the freemen of the colony, a provision which made Maryland a far more democratic community than Massachusetts. Another feature of this colony distinguished it from its predecessors. Though it was started largely to provide a place of refuge for Roman Catholics, who were freely permitted to go to it, the majority of the settlers were always Anglican Protestants, and the Anglican Church was the established church of the colony. But toleration was granted not only to Roman Catholics but to other sects: Maryland was for a long time one of the few places in the world where, in the intolerant seventeenth century, religious freedom existed.

We have dwelt in some detail upon the remarkable group of colonies founded in these years, for two reasons. In the first place the work of these years went far to fix the character of the British Commonwealth. It determined that a remarkable variety of type was to be not merely permitted but encouraged within the limits of the Commonwealth. It determined also that political liberty and the practice of self-government were to be characteristic of the British

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 54 (*c*).

lands. Finally, in two instances, Maryland and Rhode Island, a real system of religious toleration had been attained, and this also was to be, in the future, one of the characteristics of all the British plantations. Charles I. and his government certainly deserve a share of the credit for these things, though it cannot be contended that they deliberately planned them. They encouraged variety of type in the new lands, instead of trying to force them all into a single mould; they permitted in New England, and ordained in Maryland, the creation of self-governing institutions; and, at the least, they placed no obstacle in the way of the growth of religious toleration. In colonial matters, at any rate, the government of Charles I. was no tyranny; it made real contributions to the growth of a commonwealth of free and different societies.

Yet more important was the bearing of these events upon the vital conflict of ideals and principles which was soon to be renewed in the islands.

It is clear that the activity of the Puritan leaders in colonisation partly accounts for the deceptive quietude of England during the eleven years of personal government: the Puritan enthusiasts had found a field in which their ideals could be put into practice. On the other hand, the success of these experiments encouraged them, when the time came, to bold action in England. Perhaps it also stimulated those who thought differently to resistance; for what appeared as a model to one temper might well seem like a warning to another. The ideal of a Bible Commonwealth had been proved to be not impracticable. Just as the spectacle of triumphant democracy in America stimulated the French, in the eighteenth century, to put into operation the theories of Rousseau, and thus helped to bring about the French Revolution, so the spectacle of the Bible Commonwealths of the New World stimulated the Puritans of England, and thus helped to bring about the Puritan Revolution. During the years which preceded the meeting of the Long Parliament, Puritans in England were co-operating in the organisation of colonial schemes, and discussing problems of Church and State, which these schemes suggested. There was increasing intercourse between the old and the new England. And when the conflict came, many colonists, filled with the fervour of the pioneer, hurried back to play their part in it.

§ 4. *Ship Money and its Significance.*

In the long debate which led to the Civil War and the Revolution of 1649, there were always two elements, a religious element and a constitutional element. The religious element was predominant in the migrations which we have just examined, as it was also in the Scottish troubles which were going on during the same years. Between 1629 and the meeting of the Long Parliament the discussion of the constitutional problem was largely in abeyance. But towards the end of this period it was raised in a very vital way by the fiscal devices to which the king was driven.

The necessity of finding a revenue forced the king to employ every possible means of raising funds to which a legal colour could be given. He still, of course, collected tonnage and poundage: the Petition of Right had not definitely prohibited this, and, though Parliament had not passed the customary Act, the view of the Crown lawyers was that, as these duties were the ancient right of the Crown and had not been prohibited, no act was necessary. An ingenious mode of raising money by 'distraint of knighthood' was invented in 1630. Edward I. had forced landowners to take up knighthood or pay a fine because he wanted fighting men; the use of this device solely for the purpose of getting the fines was formally legal, but none the less was an irritating abuse. Equally irritating was the revival of ancient claims to forest jurisdiction for purposes of exaction.

But beyond comparison the most famous of these devices was ship-money. Kings in time of war had long exercised the right of calling upon maritime counties either to contribute ships or to pay an equivalent in cash. Being anxious to strengthen the fleet, Charles in 1634 required the maritime counties to provide ships bigger than any of them (save London) possessed, or to pay an equivalent. The demand was made in time of peace; moreover, it might be fairly held to fall under the heading of the taxation prohibited by the Petition of Right; but the lawyers, or some of them, decided that it was legal, and the money was successfully raised. Next year, though there was no war or danger of war, the tax was repeated, and imposed on inland as well as maritime counties. Ten out of twelve judges declared that the tax might be rightfully levied from the whole kingdom if the kingdom was in danger, of which

the king must be sole judge. Again the money was raised, though there were more protests. It is fair to note that it was all spent upon the fleet, which became more efficient than it had hitherto been, and did some good work, releasing three hundred captives from the pirates of Morocco.

In 1636 a third levy was announced. Evidently the new tax was intended to be, not an exceptional thing to meet a national danger, but a regular source of revenue: even if it were all used on the fleet, it would proportionately relieve the exchequer. John Hampden, a wealthy Buckinghamshire squire, resolved to resist, not by violence —Hampden's case has been sometimes most improperly used as a justification for resistance to the law of the land— but in the only legal way open to him: by refusing to pay on the ground that the tax was illegal, and thus challenging the issue in the law courts. The sum demanded from him was only 20s., which shows both that the actual burden of the tax was by no means oppressive, and that the resistance was purely one of principle. In a great State trial (1637), the subject was argued with immense learning on both sides. The verdict given by the whole bench of judges went against Hampden by seven votes to five. Some of the judges in their judgments spoke the language of pure absolutism, asserting that Acts of Parliament to take away the king's power to defend his kingdom were void. But it is to the credit of the bench that five judges risked the loss of their livelihood by pronouncing for Hampden. It is characteristic of seventeenth-century England that a profound constitutional issue should thus be fought out in the law courts, and that the decision of the judges should be loyally accepted until such time as the law could be altered.

But behind the ship-money case lay issues of the highest constitutional import. Where were the powers of Parliament, and what became of the liberties of England, if the king could levy such a tax even after the Petition of Right? What security was there for the continued maintenance of the laws (which Charles had hitherto observed, even if he had strained them) if even the judges of the realm were to declare that no Act of Parliament could make any difference to the king's prerogative, and were to act on that doctrine? These doubts and misgivings found echoes in a thousand manor-houses where the precedents of liberty were known and valued. There was no open resistance and very little protest; but the mind of the nation, or of the educated part of it, was being made up.

And meanwhile the king, encouraged by success, was inevitably hardening in his view of his royal rights and the wicked unreason of parliamentary restriction; and Laud was preaching the Divine Right of the Lord's Anointed; and in Ireland, Wentworth,[1] fully master of the realm, was building up an army. Also he was writing to his friend Laud, to urge that the ship-money precedent ought to be used as a proof that the king must have a similar power 'to raise payments for land forces'; he was urging that a foreign campaign thus financed would keep England quiet —the unfailing argument of arbitrary governments. 'This piece,'—ship-money—he argued, 'well-fortified, for ever vindicates the royalty at home from under the conditions and restraints of subjects.' English political liberty was indeed in danger, despite the careful legality which Charles and his advisers had hitherto observed.

§ 5. *The Collapse of Personal Government and the Definition of Limited Monarchy.*

Within a few months of the decision in the ship-money case the Scots were in arms, and Charles was helpless before them. He had made a truce; but he must have forces to make face against the Scots, unless he was to lose all power over his northern kingdom. Two alternatives lay before him: to defy the law openly; or to summon Parliament and ask for funds. Wentworth, now created Lord Strafford, advised the summons of Parliament. He believed in the value of Parliament as a means of feeling the pulse of the nation, provided it was not permitted to hamper the executive government, and he had always hoped that the time would come when it would be safe to summon it again. This seemed a good moment. National feeling, he hoped, would be stirred by the Scottish danger: here was the war with which he had hoped to distract opinion. And he knew that he could (as he actually did) get a handsome grant from the Irish Parliament, which was to meet first, and would give a good example. He did not realise how deep was the distrust of the king's aims in England; nor see that to many Englishmen the Scots appeared to be fighting for a cause that was their own. So Parliament was summoned; and Eliot's companions in prison, who had pined there since 1629, were released to make a good impression.

[1] There is a good short biography of Wentworth (Strafford), by H. D. Traill.

But the new Parliament (April 1640) contained the old leaders; foremost among them John Pym, the practised political strategist; with him John Hampden, the hero of the ship-money case; quiet on the back benches a Puritan squire from Huntingdon, Oliver Cromwell.[1] They were asked for supplies for the Scottish war: they answered that they knew not whether they had any money to give until their liberties were secure. Within three weeks the breach was final; and the 'Short' Parliament was dissolved, while excited mobs in London threatened to sack Laud's palace and released rioters from prison.

But the Scottish war had to be carried on. Somehow or other, by desperate devices—among them the issue of debased coinage—money was raised: even Spain was asked in vain for help. But the troops who could be got together were untrained, undisciplined, and full of discontent, while the Scots were fully prepared. The Scottish army crossed the border: a feeble attempt was made to resist them at Newburn on the Tyne: Newcastle had to be abandoned, and the Scots occupied all Northumberland and Durham. Halting there, they presented a petition to the king for the redress of their grievances and the summons of an English Parliament; twelve English peers also sent up a similar petition. In desperation Charles summoned at York a meeting of English peers to see if they would help him. But the best they could do was to negotiate with the Scots. The Scots would grant an armistice if the expenses of their army were paid, at the rate of £25,000 a month. But where was the money to be got, in addition to the money for the English troops which still had to be kept on foot? There was no way out of it. A new Parliament was summoned, and held its first meeting on 3rd November 1640. It was the famous Long Parliament.

The meeting of the Long Parliament is one of the great dates in the history of free institutions. For its members—practised men of affairs, most of them, and some with long parliamentary experience of dealing with the king—came together with a clear recognition that what they had to do was not merely to record and defend ancient precedents and privileges, but in effect to define in an unmistakable way the powers of Parliament and its relations with the Crown, and to do away once for all with the ambiguities

[1] The best of the many biographies of Cromwell is by C. H. Firth, in the Heroes of the Nations Series.

of precedent, which had enabled the king to carry on government in his own way during the last eleven years. On this main issue there was in effect no division among them. So far as this was concerned, there was practically no king's party at all. The early proceedings of the Long Parliament were the work of the united representatives of a united nation.

The first and most sensational task which they undertook was the removal and punishment of the chief agents of the recent system of government. On a message from the House of Commons that a charge of high treason was to be laid against Strafford by the process of impeachment, the Lords ordered his imprisonment pending his trial; Laud was similarly dealt with; the Secretary of State only escaped by fleeing to France, and the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, who as Chief Justice had presided in Hampden's case, by fleeing to Holland.

It was the prolonged trial and subsequent attainder of Strafford which held the public eye; to it we must return. Meanwhile the problem of the Scots had to be dealt with: they were paid maintenance allowance until the questions at issue between them and the king should be settled. But only the king himself could settle them. He did so during a visit to Scotland which Parliament, very unwillingly, allowed him to make in August 1641. He had, of course, no alternative but to give way on every point, and to accept the results of the Scottish revolution. But he used the opportunity to get into touch with a party of Scottish peers, headed by the Earl of Montrose,[1] who were discontented with the leadership of the Earl of Argyll and the ministers. There was, indeed, a large body of opinion in Scotland which was eager to make friends with the king, once the Kirk was established, and this was to have important future consequences. In the meanwhile, the suspicion that Charles was making a Scottish party for himself did not increase the friendliness of the parliamentarian leaders.

But the main business of the Long Parliament was neither the settlement of Scotland (which was not directly their business) nor even the impeachment of Strafford; it was the definition of the English constitution; and this was effected in a very important series of measures during the

[1] There is a good little life of the gallant and chivalrous Montrose, by Mowbray Morris, in the English Men of Action Series, and a longer one by C. S. Terry.

autumn of 1640 and in the course of 1641. To all these measures Charles I. had no alternative but to yield, though he did so in many cases with the worst possible grace. Taking them in a logical rather than a chronological order, in the first place, a *Triennial Act* (Feb. 1641) provided that Parliament should be summoned at least once in every three years: if three years elapsed without a meeting the Lord Chancellor must summon one without waiting for the king's orders; if he failed the sheriffs must hold the elections. Government without Parliament was henceforth to be impossible. In the second place, all the special prerogative courts of the Tudor period—Star Chamber, High Commission Court, Council of the North, Council of Wales—were abolished outright (1641). Henceforth the ordinary law of the land must suffice: England, unlike other European countries even to this day, must do without special administrative courts for the maintenance of the authority of government. In the third place, the Tonnage and Poundage Act (1641) declared it illegal to levy any customs duties without parliamentary grant, while another Act formally declared the illegality of ship-money, distraint of knighthood, and forest exactions. These Acts, taken in conjunction with the Petition of Right, ensured that henceforth all taxation whatsoever, direct or indirect, should be controlled by Parliament. All these enactments passed through both houses without demur, and Charles had no choice but to accept them.

This was the most permanent and the most valuable part of the work of the Long Parliament, and it was done during the Parliament's first year. It outlasted all the revolutionary changes of the next eighteen years, and was accepted without question as the framework of the English constitution at the Restoration. But it was far more than a mere restatement of precedents. It was a whole constitution, the first clear definition of a limited parliamentary monarchy in history. It left the Crown still responsible for the conduct of executive government and for the appointment of ministers, holding very much the position of the President in the constitution of the United States. But the Crown must always now work in co-operation with Parliament, especially because without Parliament it could not obtain the necessary means for carrying on government even in times of peace. And the Crown must accept, and act within the terms of, the common law of the land, modified only by such changes as Parliament might intro-

duce: there were no longer to be any special jurisdictions or prerogative courts outside the ordinary course of law. Here, indeed, was a clear definition of the fundamentals of a free constitution.

§ 6. *The Cleavage of Parties, and the Drift towards Civil War.*

On the main constitutional question practically the whole Parliament was united. But already divergences of view were beginning to appear, and two parties were shaping themselves. Events move rapidly in a time of revolution. Within fifteen months of the opening of the Long Parliament the parties were so clearly marked that civil war had become inevitable; within two years it had broken out.

The impeachment of Strafford began the rise of a feeling favourable to the king. The Commons had been agreed as to the necessity of removing the one man of great power and vigour upon whom the king could rely; and they had been agreed as to procedure by impeachment on a charge of high treason, on the ground that the accused had endeavoured to subvert 'the ancient fundamental laws' of England, and to introduce an arbitrary and tyrannical form of government. But difficulties soon arose. The English law of treason limited this crime to 'levying war against the king': it knew nothing of treason to the nation to which the king might be a party. The House of Lords, as the judicial body before whom the charge was laid, was bound to administer the law, and nothing but the law. The Commons tried to buttress their case by producing Sir Henry Vane's notes of the proceedings at a meeting of the Privy Council, when Strafford had said 'You have an army in Ireland that you may employ to reduce this kingdom to obedience.' But this was weak evidence. Vane's notes might be inaccurate. 'This kingdom' might be Scotland. Even if it was England, was this 'levying war against the king'? Moreover, Strafford's defence, conducted under great difficulties, had been extraordinarily eloquent and effective, and had aroused much sympathy. The impeachment seemed likely to break down. The leaders of the Commons decided to proceed by the swifter method of an Act of Attainder, which amounted to a condemnation without trial. But there was substantial opposition even in the Commons to the use of this weapon—a weapon of tyranny, hunted out from among the bad precedents of the Wars of the Roses, and much used by Henry VIII. Rancour was driving the

advocates of the Reign of Law into dangerous courses. But they persisted. Charles in vain tried to save his friend by promising never to employ him again in any public office : the Act of Attainder, sentencing Strafford to death, was passed, and awaited the king's signature (May 1641).

With a noble self-sacrifice Strafford advised him to sign ; and after an agonising day he did so. For the degradation of his surrender he never forgave himself ; on the scaffold he referred to it as justifying God's dealings with him ; and he never forgave the parliamentary leaders. Strafford went to his doom (12th May) with a pious courage which men could not but admire ; and as he passed the house where Laud was imprisoned, the archbishop, who knew his turn must come, stood at a window with his hands raised in benediction. The vindictiveness of Strafford's punishment, in the eyes of many men, put the parliamentary leaders in the wrong. Their excuse was that so long as Strafford lived they were not safe ; but this act made a real reconciliation impossible. For the exercise of vengeance against Laud there was not yet time. He waited in prison for nearly four years ; then (Jan. 1645) he was executed as mercilessly as his friend.

Meanwhile questions of religion were being discussed, and on these there was no such agreement as there was on constitutional questions. The extreme Puritans, more numerous in this Parliament than in any of its predecessors, were eager to change the whole constitution of the national Church. They had introduced, early in the Parliament, a bill for the exclusion of the bishops from the House of Lords. They followed this up with a more vehement measure 'for the utter abolition of archbishops, bishops, deacons, archdeacons, prebendaries and canons,' which was known as the Root-and-Branch Bill. But there was a large section even in the Commons, and a still larger in the country, which felt a real devotion for the English Church, and would resist to the death any such change. A middle party, including many of the parliamentary leaders, had no objection to episcopacy in itself, but regarded the bishops as the most dangerous supporters of the royal prerogative ; and on that ground, and also because they did not wish to alienate their staunchest adherents, they gave a half-unwilling support to these measures. The majority was thus against the bishops. The friends of episcopacy naturally tended to become a more solid party, and to take the king's side on all but fundamental constitutional questions.

Another profound cause of difference was also emerging. Now that the constitution had been defined, should the king be trusted to exercise the great powers which it still left to him, or must he be regarded with unaltered distrust, and must Parliament in effect assume charge of the executive government? Those who took the Anglican side in the Church controversy were for trusting the king. The leaders of the majority could not bring themselves to trust him, and their attitude made any real reconciliation impossible. Their distrust was not without grounds. Charles I. evidently held the view that he was not bound to keep faith with the foes of the Divine ordinance of monarchy. But besides this general ground of distrust there were several suspicious episodes during the first months of the Long Parliament. In May 1641 news leaked out of a foolish plot in the army, which still lay in the north: most of the officers were royalist, and there was talk of their marching on London. Though the plot came to nothing, the most was made of it; it was the occasion for an Act forbidding the dissolution of this Parliament without its own consent—an Act which deprived the king of what he regarded as a fundamental prerogative. There were suspicions also about the king's intrigues in Scotland, which were heightened by rumours of a mysterious plot for killing or kidnapping the Earl of Argyll, leader of the extreme Presbyterian party in Scotland. The king denied all knowledge of it, but the parliamentary leaders believed themselves to be surrounded by a network of conspiracy.

But it was from Ireland that the bombshell came which in the event made a peaceable settlement impossible. It is noteworthy that as Scotland had precipitated the constitutional struggle, so Ireland drove it into its most crucial stage. Strafford had made himself complete master in Ireland, but he had aroused many resentments, and his plan of a plantation in Connaught had awakened all the rankling memories of earlier plantations; his sudden fall inevitably produced restlessness, and the disbandment of the Irish army, which was naturally demanded by the English Parliament, made the situation dangerous. During the parliamentary crisis the king, who still hoped for help from Ireland, had negotiated with some of the Catholic leaders, especially the Anglo-Irish lords of the Pale, and had held out the hope of toleration for the Catholics in return for assistance. But while many of the Lords of the Pale were strong royalists and loyal to the English connexion, the mass of Irish

Catholics were not content to trust to vague promises; and they knew that if the Puritans won the upper hand they would have still crueller masters than before. They organised an insurrection which broke out in October 1641. The leaders claimed to be acting for the king, and displayed a forged commission with the royal seal of Scotland, which may have been torn from an old charter. A rising in a country so full of bitter memories and old resentments as Ireland could not possibly be peaceful and orderly; and in many parts of the country, notably in Ulster, there were scenes of carnage in which women and children were massacred as well as men. Probably some four or five thousand lost their lives by slaughter at the outbreak of the rebellion, and perhaps twice as many by starvation and other hardships. In England the atrocities were inevitably multiplied by rumour: men talked of as many as two hundred thousand having been slain by Irish savagery, egged on by the machinations of Rome.

When the news of the Irish rebellion reached London there was no difference of opinion as to the need for prompt and severe vengeance. An army must be raised, and Ireland must be reconquered. But who should command the army? That, under the laws of England, was for the king to decide. But the king was already suspected of being in relations with some of the Irish leaders: Ireland was the country from which Strafford had meant to draw the forces which were to crush resistance in England. Could the king safely be given the disposal of an English army, and a free hand to deal with the Irish problem? The question raised in an acute form the issue of confidence or no confidence in the king. It raised also the issue of control over the army, which became acute a little later.

On 8th November 1641, John Pym introduced in the House of Commons a formidable document, known as the Grand Remonstrance, which definitely and in clean-cut terms raised the question of confidence in the king. In strong language of the most partisan character every unconstitutional act of the reign was set forth, and every action of Parliament was vindicated as necessary. A stormy debate followed, in which the party now definitely to be called Royalist showed its strength. The Grand Remonstrance was only carried amid tumult by 159 votes to 148. The House, united at its first meeting, was now divided, like the nation, into two almost equal parties; and the stronger

party was prepared to disregard all opposition and to make no compromise. 'If the Remonstrance had been rejected,' said Cromwell, 'I would have sold all I had the next morning, and never have seen England any more.' From this moment civil war was inevitable. The next step was the introduction of a Militia Bill, providing for the nomination by Parliament of a Lord-general and a Lord-admiral having the fullest authority over all the forces by land and sea: thus depriving the king of a power which all his predecessors had invariably exercised.

Too late, in January 1642, Charles decided to take parliamentary leaders as his ministers. He chose the chiefs of the royalist party, as was natural. They had voted for and they still loyally accepted all the constitutional enactments of the first session. But they were now simply party leaders, and the party feud was all but irreconcilable.

It was made quite irreconcilable when the king, hearing that it was proposed to impeach the queen, resolved to turn the tables on his enemies by impeaching the chief of them on a charge of overturning the constitution, and of treasonable relations with the Scots. Certainly Pym and his fellows had come nearer to 'levying war against the king' than ever Strafford had done. But when the king himself came down to the House with a band of excited young royalists to arrest Pym, Hampden, Hazlerigg, Holles and Strode, his action was tantamount to a declaration of war. He did not succeed in his aim. The five members were never arrested: perhaps that is why this episode is called the Arrest of the Five Members. They escaped to the protection of the City of London, whence they returned two days later, escorted by the trained bands of the city and by four thousand freeholders who had come up from Buckinghamshire to defend Hampden. Six weeks later the queen left England with the crown jewels; and the king set out for York. The final breach had come (March 1642).

The king was followed (June) by a document, drawn up by Parliament, which made the issues in dispute plain beyond a doubt. The Nineteen Propositions which formed this parting manifesto of the majority in the House of Commons had nothing to say about government without Parliament, or unparliamentary taxation, or prerogative courts. All these points were already safely won. The Propositions may be summarised in one: that Parliament and no longer the king was to be responsible for the executive government of England. Parliament was to approve the appoint-

ments of all ministers of state, chief justices, and members of the Privy Council. Parliament was to regulate the education and the marriages of the king's children. Parliament was to decide which peers should be allowed to sit and vote in the House of Lords. Parliament was to determine the liturgy and government of the Church. Parliament was to control all military forces and fortresses.

These proposals were not a defence of ancient liberties based on precedent. They were the proclamation of a revolutionary change, and many might reasonably doubt whether a large and shifting body like Parliament could directly exercise such powers with efficiency. Such a revolution a large part of the English people was unprepared to accept, though it had willingly accepted the clear definition of a 'limited' and constitutional monarchy which had been embodied in the early Acts of the Long Parliament. The issue could only be decided by arms; and the appeal to arms lets loose all sorts of unpredictable forces.

[Trevelyan's or Montague's books, as for last chapter; also Gardiner, Ranke, Hallam, and Gardiner's *Constitutional Documents*. Masson's *Life of Milton* (7 vols.) is not merely a biography, but a history of the period of great value. Hutton's *English Church from Charles I. to Anne*.]

CHAPTER VI

CIVIL WAR IN THE ISLANDS

(A.D. 1642-1649)

§ 1. *The Situation at the Outbreak of War.*

DURING the next seven years and more, civil war raged intermittently in all parts of the islands ; and hand in hand with civil war went revolution, in a succession of those sweeping changes which a general upheaval always brings. It is the only period of violent revolution in the modern history of the islands. Like most sweeping changes brought about by force, the changes of these years were short-lived ; but they left behind them ideas and grievances which worked like yeast for a long time to come, and helped to shape the destiny of the islands and of the commonwealth.

Civil war had already led, in Scotland, to the complete victory of the popular party and of the Presbyterian Church, whose doctrine and discipline were established and enforced with a rigidity that knew no tolerance. But the dominant party, headed by the Earl of Argyll and the ministers of the Kirk, were convinced that the security of their triumph depended upon the issue of the conflict in England. On the other hand, there was a party which, while it accepted the Covenant and the Presbyterian system, was still royalist in politics, sympathised with the king in the English struggle, and would have been glad to help him. The chief member of this party was the brilliant and chivalrous Earl (later Marquis) of Montrose : he was to make in the later stages of the war a daring venture on the king's behalf, which very nearly won success.

In Ireland civil war was already raging when the struggle in England broke out, and it continued to rage throughout the whole course of the English war. It was a very confused struggle. The Irish Catholics held about three-fifths of the country, and in the summer of 1642 they provided themselves with a national organisation by creating a representative assembly, with a managing council, at Kilkenny. They professed loyalty to the king, but demanded

a free Parliament and complete freedom for the Roman Catholic religion, which the king dared not grant, and did not wish to grant. But their military affairs were very ill-managed: they never came near the complete victory that ought to have been within their grasp. The royalist army under the Earl of Ormond, with the aid of some troops from England, held them at bay in Leinster; other royalist forces held out in Munster; and in Ulster the Scottish settlers, having recovered from the first shock of the rebellion, and being helped by a small army from Scotland, more or less held their own. Thus there were three parties in Ireland: the Nationalists, the Royalists under Ormond, and the Scots, who were inclined to sympathise with the parliamentarian side in the English conflict. The details of the dreary struggle in Ireland cannot here be recorded; but it must be remembered that it was going on, and that its fluctuations had at various points an important bearing upon the English struggle; that was the main struggle, since the fortunes of both Scotland and Ireland must depend upon whether king or Parliament won.

It was a very real civil war which began in England when, in August 1642, the king raised his standard at Nottingham; for every class and every district in the country was divided. Even fathers and sons took opposite sides, and sometimes met in battle; and there were separate little wars in almost every district,[1] which make it very difficult to get a clear view of the whole. It was not a conflict between class and class. Three-quarters of the peers, indeed, stood by the king; and, although only about one-third of the members of the House of Commons followed him, he had a substantial majority among the country gentlemen. Yet all the leaders, on the parliamentary side equally with the king's side, were either peers or country gentlemen. In some regions, notably the east and south-east, the bulk of the yeomanry were stalwart on the parliamentary side; but this was not so in the greater part of the country. Everywhere, even in regions generally loyal to the king, most of the trading classes were strong parliamentarians. This class formed, indeed, the backbone of that party. Wherever there was a substantial town, there was a parliamentary stronghold; and the staunchness of the London trained bands, and the bold resistance of towns like Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Glou-

[1] There are some good accounts of the war as it affected special counties or towns. English students will find it interesting to study the war in their own counties.

cester and Plymouth, alone prevented a royalist victory during the first two years of the war. Yet in every town there was a royalist party: even in London it was estimated that one-third of the population favoured the king. And there were large elements of the population—some even of the peers, many country gentry, and a very large proportion of the humbler classes—who stood aloof as far as possible, either because they were indifferent to this conflict of principles, or because they were torn asunder by divided sympathies. Both sides had to resort to impressment to fill their ranks, though there was never more than 2½ *per cent.* of the population under arms—a figure which may be compared with the 15 *per cent.* enrolled during the great war against Germany. In the later stages of the war large numbers of men formed themselves into bands to keep both parties away from their part of the country, and these 'clubmen,' as they were called, caused difficulty to the generals on both sides. Only a limited portion of the English population was, in truth, as yet sufficiently awakened from the routine of custom to know or care much about even such fundamental questions as the war was fought to decide. This vast mass of indifference, resentful of interference with its habits, was a factor of which statesmen had to take account. It was wholly unready for any sweeping changes, and especially for any high-handed interference with its customary modes of life; a fact which passionate reformers were apt to neglect when they spoke of 'the people' as demanding the acceptance of principles which they themselves loved with the devotion of parents.

Geographically the lines of division were clearer:[1] Parliament controlled the south and east, from the Wash to the Solent; the king was strongest in the north and the west; the Midlands were divided. But each party had many adherents in the regions dominated by the other. Even in the south-east, upon which the king never succeeded in making any impression, the 'second civil war' of 1648 showed that there were thousands of royalist adherents.

Parliament possessed great advantages at the opening of the struggle; it controlled the richest and most populous part of the country, and, holding practically all the ports, it had all the shipping of the country in its hands, enjoyed the whole profit of import duties, and shut off the king from easy communication with the Continent. This advantage

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 38 (*a*).

was increased by the fact that the Navy early declared for the parliamentary side: this enabled troops to be easily moved, and communication to be maintained with important ports like Hull. The raising of funds was thus relatively easy for the Parliament. Though it was loth to levy new taxes because of the discontent they caused, and found that the trading classes were not eager to pay, it was gradually driven to make great innovations in the system of taxation. In this respect its work was lasting, and England broke away from the outworn fiscal system of the Middle Ages. The king, on the other hand, always found great difficulty in raising money. He had to rely mainly upon gifts from his followers, many of whom gave ungrudgingly, and permanently impoverished their family fortunes. His one great advantage was that the gentry, the majority of whom adhered to him, formed, with their grooms and keepers, excellent fighting material, especially as cavalry:—far better than Parliament could command, until it ceased to rely upon volunteers and half-trained militia, and created a professional army. The superior dash and confidence of the king's men very nearly gave him the victory in the first two years of the war. On both sides, but especially on the parliamentary side, the infantry had a way of melting, even after a victory.

§ 2. *The First Three Campaigns.*

In the short campaign of 1642, the royalists won considerable advantages. The main royal army in the Midlands, after an indecisive battle at Edgehill (October), took Oxford, which remained the king's headquarters throughout the war, and for a time seriously threatened London; the cavaliers of the north, under Newcastle, threatened to overwhelm the parliamentarians under Fairfax, whose strength rested on the 'woollen' towns of the West Riding, and on Hull; and in the far south-west Hopton won the upper hand for the king in Devon and Cornwall. During the next year, 1643, these advantages were pressed home. In the north, Fairfax was badly beaten at Adwalton Moor, and penned into Hull; in the south-west the main parliamentary army was shattered. Bristol was captured by Prince Rupert, and it was only the resistance of the towns of Plymouth and Gloucester which prevented the triumphant royalists of this region from linking up with the main armies in the Midlands. Gloucester was hard beset; its

relief by a parliamentary army in September probably saved the parliamentarians from disaster.

Only in one region was there a gleam of success for the parliamentary cause. In the east the counties grouped together in the Eastern Association were better organised than other districts; and as part of the army of the Eastern Association Oliver Cromwell [1] had begun the creation of a new kind of fighting force. He had realised the futility of trusting to the ill-disciplined levies upon which Parliament relied against the dash and fury of the Cavalier gentlemen; and during the first winter he had raised a regiment of horse, taking only men who were in earnest about the cause. He trained them thoroughly; he armed them well; he saw that they were regularly paid; and he insisted on the strictest discipline. This regiment may be called the first body of professional soldiers engaged in the war. But it was more than that. It was a body of enthusiasts, and it was soon to prove that under good leadership such a force was all but irresistible, and deserved the name of 'Ironsides,' which Prince Rupert later gave to its leader. Already in 1643 Cromwell and his men had played a chief part in the conquest of Lincolnshire by the parliamentary forces of the Eastern counties; he was now second in command and predominant in influence and authority in that army, through which the method and example of his own regiment was steadily spreading.

At the end of 1643 both sides began to look about for allies. The king sought aid from Ireland. He empowered Ormond to arrange a cessation of arms for a year with the Catholic rebels, and to open negotiations for a settlement which might bring all Ireland over to his side. No settlement could be reached, because the Catholics demanded higher terms than the king could give. But at least the 'cessation' enabled part of Ormond's army to be drafted over to England; it was landed in Cheshire, but achieved nothing and was destroyed in January 1644. Charles gained nothing from Ireland, but public discredit for having treated with the rebels.

Parliament, on the other hand, sought for aid from the Scots, and the dominant party in Scotland, alarmed at the prospect of a complete royalist victory, were ready to give it, on one condition: that the Presbyterian system of Church government, on the Scottish model, should be established in England and eventually in Ireland also.

[1] For all this see Firth's *Life of Cromwell* and his *Cromwell's Army*.

The taking of the Covenant was made an indispensable condition of the alliance. The majority in Parliament, now purged of all its Anglican members, was inclined to the Presbyterian view, and had already abolished episcopacy and invited an assembly of Puritan divines to meet at Westminster, to advise it upon the reorganisation of the national Church in administration, creed and order of service. But Parliament was far from wishing to set up a Church so independent of the State, and wielding so wide an authority over the lives of private men, as the Scots had established; and many of its members feared and disliked the rigidity and intolerance of the Scottish system. In face of the danger of a royalist victory, however, these misgivings had to be disregarded; and in September 1643 the Solemn League and Covenant was accepted and sworn to by both sides. This committed Parliament to impose upon England a Presbyterian system with all its rigid discipline.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines was strengthened by the addition of some Scottish representatives; and during the next four years it continued to sit and draft schemes of Church government, a directory of public worship, and a creed and catechism. But Parliament did not allow to the Assembly of Divines any such freedom of action as the General Assembly enjoyed in Scotland. It asked from them only 'humble advice,' it made substantial modifications in their proposals, and it insisted upon maintaining the control of the State over the Church. In the eyes of the Scots this was the deadly heresy of Erastianism, and it strained the friendship of the allies from the first. Nevertheless a Presbyterian organisation of the Church was devised and approved, and in the following years was partially applied in England. Above all, the Assembly of Divines drew up a Confession of Faith, rigidly Calvinistic in character, as well as two catechisms: these, though they were never widely used in England, were adopted in Scotland, and became—especially the Shorter Catechism—supremely important factors in the education of the Scottish people. Whatever may be said in criticism of the Shorter Catechism, it challenged those who had to study it to think about great questions. Its first question, 'What is man's chief end?' stands in sharp contrast with the trite and obvious 'What is your name?' of the English Church Catechism: its second question, 'What is God?' is even more tremendous. The Scottish people is a people whose

children have for more than two centuries been daily challenged by these profound inquiries.

The intervention of the Scots, which resulted from the Solemn League and Covenant, was the decisive factor in the campaign of 1644.[1] Their invasion of the north broke Newcastle's power there, and drove him to take refuge in York. Prince Rupert had to hurry northward from the Midlands to relieve him. On the other hand, the parliamentary army of the Eastern Counties, with Cromwell in command of its cavalry, came north to join the Scots and the Yorkshire levies under Fairfax ; and a big pitched battle, the most important of the war in regard to the number of men engaged, was fought at Marston Moor in July 1644. It ended in a complete royalist defeat, though at the beginning it seemed to be going in favour of the cavaliers. The decisive factor in the fighting was the steadiness and fighting power of Cromwell's horse, and the skill with which he handled them. Marston Moor was in truth the turning point of the war. It lost to the king the whole of Northern England, which during the next two years was completely subjugated by the Scottish army and the local parliamentary forces : he now had to fight on two fronts.[2]

Nevertheless the king's cause did not yet seem hopeless. For everywhere else the aristocratic generals on the parliamentary side acted with a nerveless indecision which prevented them from doing any damage to the king. The only excuse for them was that their troops were untrustworthy ; but some of them were also half-hearted. ' If we beat the king ninety-nine times,' said the Earl of Manchester, Cromwell's superior officer in the army of the Eastern Association, ' yet he is king still, and so will his posterity be after him ; but if the king beat us once we shall all be hanged, and our posterity made slaves.' That was scarcely the temper which makes for victory.

Meanwhile, in the late summer of 1644, the gallant Marquis of Montrose [3] had raised the king's standard in the Highlands of Scotland. He appealed specially to the hatred of the clan Campbell and their chief, the Earl of Argyll, which was widely felt among the clans of the Western Highlands : now that Argyll, as the head of the Kirk party, dominated the government of Scotland, the Macdonalds and other clans dreaded the use he might make of his power in their

[1] Compare the two maps in Atlas, Plate 38.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] See Morris's or Terry's *Montrose.*

own wild country. Helped by a small contingent from Ireland, but relying mainly upon the valour of the clansmen, Montrose marched through the Highlands,[1] growing stronger at every stage, and avoiding two of the armies that were closing down upon him, crushed the third at Tippermuir near Perth (September 1644), and occupied the town. Later he captured Aberdeen, and in the depths of winter he burst into the Campbell country, burning and slaying. The avalanche was ready to descend into the Lowlands in the next campaign. The king's cause was looking up in Scotland. In Ireland also negotiations were being carried on for a peace with the Catholic rebels which would bring them into the field on the king's side. These negotiations did not come to anything definite till the next year, when they were too late; but the knowledge that they were going on made the situation serious.

§ 3. *The Professional Army, and the Downfall of the Royalist Cause.*

In spite of the victory of Marston Moor, therefore, things looked by no means bright for the Parliament in the autumn of 1644. Negotiations with the king were attempted, but they came to nothing. It was by other means that the deadlock was to be solved. During the winter very plain words were spoken in Parliament about the half-heartedness and incompetence of the army chiefs, and the inefficiency of the forces under their command. The plainest of all were spoken by Oliver Cromwell, who had a good right to speak, since his troops were the most efficient on either side, and his leadership had always led to success when he had a free hand. He complained that there were too many politicians in the army. 'If the army be not put into another method,' he bluntly said, 'and the war more vigorously prosecuted, the people can bear the war no longer, and will enforce you to a dishonourable peace.'

Cromwell was regarded with deep distrust in many quarters. His regiment was notoriously full of Independents and all kinds of sectaries, enemies (in the eyes of the orthodox) of all fixed and decent order, and especially of the Presbyterian system. Their influence was spreading through the army of the Eastern Association, and good Presbyterian chaplains had been shocked by the freedom and boldness of their ideas. Cromwell did nothing to check them, but

[1] See the map of Scotland, Atlas, Plate 40 (*a*).

rather encouraged them, on the plea that so long as his men were good fighters and zealous for the cause all was well. He was suspected of being himself ill-disposed to the Presbyterian system, though he had taken the Covenant, and of being inclined to the noxious system of toleration, which would be an end of all decency and good order. The Scots in particular distrusted him.

But on the military question the soundness of Cromwell's position could not be refuted. Parliament agreed to a self-denying ordinance, which in its final form required every member of both houses to resign all military offices, but left it open for any of them to be subsequently appointed. Parliament also decided to reorganise the bulk of the army on a professional basis, and no longer to trust to levies of trained bands or militia. Sir Thomas Fairfax, who had taken no part in politics but had shown himself an able captain, was appointed Commander-in-Chief; Skippon, who had a good deal of professional experience on the Continent, was made Major-General to deal with questions of organisation; and Cromwell was later appointed second-in-command. But it was to him that the new army, from the beginning of its reconstruction, looked up as its real leader. He now held a position of commanding influence; for he was not only one of the principal army chiefs, he was also the only officer who sat in Parliament, and was a member of the Committee of Both Kingdoms for the conduct of the war.

The new model army [1] was only beginning its organisation, and was full of raw recruits, when it was called upon, in June 1645, to deal with an unexpected concentration of royalist forces in the Midlands, which threatened an attack upon the hitherto inviolate area of the Eastern Association. Fairfax hurried up to meet the king; and battle was joined at Naseby, Cromwell commanding the parliamentary cavalry. The battle was a confused one, and at first went badly against the parliament men. But, as at Marston Moor, the valour and steadfastness of Cromwell's horse turned the day. The royalists were completely broken, and nearly five thousand prisoners, all the king's baggage and artillery, and all his private papers, fell into the hands of the victors. Fresh from this crushing victory, the new model army turned upon the royalists of the south-west, hitherto almost unbrokenly successful; and in July, at the battle of Langport, near Bridgewater, shattered that army also.

[1] For the military methods of the Civil War see Firth's *Cromwell's Army*.

Naseby and Langport between them ruined the royalist cause. The next year was occupied in the gradual subjugation of those parts of the country in which the royalists still held out [1]—a slow and difficult task in which the New Model repeatedly displayed its efficiency. When Oxford, the king's headquarters, capitulated in June 1646, the civil war in England was for the time being at an end; the king, after a good deal of hesitation, put himself into the hands of the Scots at Newark; and the problem of settlement after all this upheaval had to be faced.

Meanwhile the hopes which had been raised by Montrose's early successes in Scotland had been raised higher still, only to be dashed to the ground. In the spring of 1645 he was still marching about the Highlands and winning victories over every force sent against him. In August (two months after Naseby) he broke down into the Lowlands, and in a brilliant attack at Kilsyth broke the main Covenanting force, giving no quarter. Kilsyth seemed to put all Scotland at his feet: he summoned in the king's name a meeting of the Scottish Parliament at Glasgow, and hoped to invade England with a great host. But his Highland followers melted away as soon as they had won their victory, to take their plunder home. They left him with only twelve hundred men to meet the forces which were hurried back from the Scottish army in England. Within a month of his triumph at Kilsyth his little army was annihilated at Philiphaugh, and Montrose fled abroad, to gather strength for a new desperate onslaught. The king's hopes from Scotland, as from England, had come to naught.

In despair, the king had already made a last attempt to enlist the help of the Irish Catholics. In August 1645—after Naseby and Langport—he sent the English Catholic, Lord Glamorgan, with full powers to make an agreement—almost any agreement—which would range Irish armies on his side. But concessions which would have been welcomed, and would have ensured Irish loyalty, a few years earlier, were now insufficient. A papal legate, Rinuccini, had arrived in Ireland, and made himself the dominant factor in the counsels of the Kilkenny assembly; and being bent primarily upon securing a complete triumph for Roman Catholicism, he insisted upon stiffening the terms. Glamorgan got a promise of ten thousand men, but only on condition that all penal laws against the Catholics should

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 38 (*b*).

be rescinded, that all churches and abbeys then in Catholic possession should remain Catholic, and that a free Parliament should be summoned, no longer bound by Poynings' Act, which made it subject to the English and Irish Privy Councils. This would have made Ireland an independent State, linked to England only by the Crown, and Roman Catholic. When the agreement became public, as it was bound to do, the indignation in England was great, not only among parliamentarians, but among the king's followers. Ormond himself, the head of the king's party in Ireland, refused to sanction it. And meanwhile the force whose aid it was to purchase had been made useless by the parliamentary victories in England: it could not even be transported, since every English port was in parliamentarian hands. Too late the Irish Catholic leaders resolved to ratify the peace without the religious clauses, trusting to the king's gratitude for concessions. They had to override Rinuccini and the clerical party to reach this decision, which in any case was of no avail.

For the victory of this moderate party was short-lived. In June 1646 Owen Roe O'Neill, head of the Catholic forces in Ulster, almost annihilated the Scots of the north in the battle of Benburb, the one considerable victory won by the Catholics during the war. This victory restored the ascendency of Rinuccini and the Catholic stalwarts. They renounced the peace and the cessation of arms, and began a big attack on Dublin (November 1646). Ormond, whose forces had been depleted, had no alternative, if English supremacy in Ireland was to be maintained, but to hand over the city to Parliament. A very able parliamentary general, Michael Jones, was sent over to take command; and, not content with defence, he sallied forth, joined forces with the garrison of Drogheda, fell upon the main Catholic army at Dangan Hill, near Trim, and almost exterminated it (August 1647). A little later the Munster Protestants inflicted an almost equally severe blow upon the Catholics in that province, and George Monk,[1] sent across to organise the resistance in Ulster, brought to a stop the Catholic successes in that province also. The Catholic insurrection was not yet by any means quelled. But its chance of complete victory had been broken, and it remained for a parliamentary army to subjugate the country thoroughly.

[1] There is a life of Monk by Julian Corbett, in the English Men of Action Series.

§ 4. *Attempts to find a Settlement.*

During these later stages of the Irish troubles, there was going on in England and Scotland a prolonged and complex series of negotiations and intrigues, in preparation for the settlement of the great issues, religious and political, about which the war had been fought. The king had gone to the Scots, because he knew there were jealousies between them and the parliamentary leaders. But though the Scots were not pleased with the hesitations of Parliament about Presbyterianism, and were ready to give large political powers to the king if he would consent to leave their Church free and triumphant, they were not ready for a breach with Parliament, and the king was not ready to accept their terms. It was obvious that his aim was to create dissensions, not to come to a frank and definite conclusion. He believed that he was indispensable, and that by playing off against one another the various parties among the wicked men who had defied the ordinances of Heaven, the cause of righteousness, as he understood it, might yet come to its own. Haunted by this belief, he carried on during the next two years a series of intrigues, often skilful, whose chief effect was to convince each party in turn that he was not to be trusted. No other conclusion seemed possible. For the truth seems to be that Charles, utterly sincere in his belief in the divine ordination of his power, and regarding those who opposed him as enemies of the truth, did genuinely believe that he was justified in deceiving such men, and had no serious intention of arriving at a lasting settlement of the questions in dispute, on any basis that conflicted with his doctrines. The first result of this attitude of mind was that the Scots, after eight months, gave up negotiating in despair. They wanted to get home ; Parliament wanted them to go ; and in February 1647, having received the arrears of their pay, they went, leaving the king in the hands of Parliament.

The king did not yet give up hopes of the Scots. But during the next twelve months he found a new field for his gifts of intrigue in the rising hostility between Parliament and the army. Parliament was bent upon a purely Presbyterian settlement of the Church, though (to the vexation of the Scots) they insisted upon keeping it in subordination to the State ; on the political side they wanted to restore the king, but to leave him in all essentials entirely dependent upon themselves. But in the army—which felt that it, and

not Parliament, had won the war—a very different set of views prevailed.

The new army, because of its professional character, was linked together by a strong *esprit de corps*. Moreover, as it had been joined especially by the men of most independent minds and greatest force of character, it had become a centre of unceasing discussions upon the profound religious and political problems which the long controversy had raised; and as the fullest freedom had been given, especially through Cromwell's influence, to all this discussion, there was an immense variety of religious opinions represented in this strange host. The various sects got along together very well in the army; why, the soldiers were tempted to ask, should variety of opinion not be equally permitted in the community? They stood for the rights of private judgment, and were resolved not to submit to the rigid regulations of a Presbyterian system. 'New presbyter was but old priest writ large'; the war of religious liberty would have been fought in vain if rigid Presbyterianism were to be its outcome. It is true, few of them were prepared to grant full toleration to Roman Catholics or to Anglicans, but that was because these creeds were held to be politically dangerous. In spite of that, the arguing soldiers of this strange army were almost the first strong advocates of religious toleration, and of full freedom of thought and speech, in the modern world. Their heresy shocked orthodox opinion. 'We detest and abhor the much endeavoured toleration,' declared a meeting of London ministers; and, again, 'if the devil had his choice whether the hierarchy, ceremonies and liturgy should be established in the kingdom, or a toleration granted, he would choose a toleration.'

Yet more remarkable were the political opinions which had grown up in the soldiers' discussions. They made little of the 'inherited liberties' and the precedents to which parliamentarians attached so much weight, but took their stand on abstract principles. Many of them, who bore the name of 'Levellers,' had worked out a complete doctrine of democracy; a handful had even the theory of Socialism. The apostle of the Levellers was John Lilburn, who was in some ways an anticipator of Rousseau. The sovereignty of the people as the one foundation of government was their principle. 'Every man born in England, the poor man, the meanest man,' ought to have a voice in choosing those who made the laws; and in a document

which they called the Agreement of the People (who had not been consulted, and certainly did not agree) they demanded biennial parliaments, equal constituencies and manhood suffrage. Had their demands been granted, the first elections would have returned a huge majority in favour of restoring his authority to the king.

It is not surprising that Parliament should have been anxious to get rid of a body so formidable, which held views of this character. Since the war was over, the army must disband—or be shipped to Ireland, to deal with the rebels there. But the army refused to disband: Parliament had given it a legitimate grievance by letting its pay fall into arrears; and besides that, the army was growing to the conviction that since God had called it to decide the war, it was its duty also to see that the settlement was a right one. It took to electing 'agitators,' two for each regiment, to represent its grievances; it demanded and enforced the expulsion of eleven members of Parliament, leaders of the rigid Presbyterian party (June 1647).

Between these two conflicting views of the Parliament and the army, daily getting further apart, stood Cromwell. He was the army's trusted leader, the only man who could control it. But he was also a member of Parliament and of what may be called the War Cabinet, the Committee of Both Kingdoms. In one essential thing his feelings were all with the army. He had, in strenuous wrestlings, won his own way to his own belief; and for him religious freedom was the greatest of all things, and the threatened tyranny of Presbytery even worse than that of Laud. But he was no sour fanatic: a jovial man, very familiar with his soldiers and fond of a jest, they tell how a grave discussion between him and one of his generals in these anxious months suddenly developed into a pillow-fight. His greatness showed in nothing more than this, that he was never the captive of formulæ and theories, however plausible, and that he had always a sense of realities, and a firm loyalty to facts. He did not very much care even about forms of Church government, but would have accepted a moderate Episcopacy or a moderate Presbytery, if either could be combined with a real toleration of differences. Nor did he greatly care about forms of government: 'he was not wedded or glued to forms of government,' he said. On the whole he thought that monarchy was the best form in England, under due safeguards; both because, as a soldier, he saw the need of a strong and accepted authority at the centre of things,

and still more because the most important thing to consider in any proposals was 'whether the spirit and temper of the people of this nation are prepared to go along with it,' and 'the people of this nation,' he knew, were used to the name and authority of the king. Above all he hated the idea of imposing any settlement, however well-seeming in itself, by mere force. 'What we gain in a free way is better than twice as much in a forced way, and will be more truly ours and our posterity's. . . . That you have by force I look upon as nothing. I do not know that force is to be used, *except we cannot get what is for the good of the kingdom without it.*' The exception was fatal. It drove him to use force in the end; and the good that he aimed at was lost for that reason. In the meantime, his hesitations almost lost him the confidence of his soldiers.

These were the factors which the unhappy king thought to play off one against the other, parleying with them all, and meaning to come to a real agreement with none. The army took possession of his person (June 1647), and offered him terms: terms far more generous than either the Scots or the Parliament would offer. They were embodied in the Heads of Proposals, drawn up by Cromwell's right-hand man, Ireton. There was to be a moderate Episcopacy, combined with all-round toleration; a new Parliament, elected by equal electoral districts on a wide franchise, and lasting for two years; and a Council of State, appointed in the first instance by agreement. It was a statesmanlike proposal, and workable. But Charles discussed it only as a means of dividing his enemies. All the time he was in touch with Parliament, and also with the Scots, who were becoming restive at the lack of respect with which their Scottish king was being handled, and were almost ready to interfere on his behalf; there was also secret work going on among the English royalists, and hopes of aid from abroad.

§ 5. *Solution by the Sword.*

Suddenly Charles slipped away from his lenient and respectful army gaolers, and took refuge in the Isle of Wight (November 1647). Within a few months a royalist revolt had broken out in South Wales, which Cromwell had to deal with, and another in Kent and Essex, which gave some trouble to Fairfax; part of the fleet revolted and went over to the royalists, and before long the more royalist party among the Scottish Presbyterians had got the upper

hand, and a Scottish army was pouring over the border to help the king (July), just four years after they had come to help the Parliament. The parliamentary forces in the north had to fall back; but Cromwell came up with reinforcements, and, breaking through the hills from Yorkshire, bore down upon the straggling Scottish army as it advanced through Lancashire, routed it at Preston (August 1648) and cut it off from its base; and finished it off at Wigan and Warrington.

These incidents are called the 'second civil war.' The first civil war had been honourably distinguished by the humanity with which it was conducted on both sides. In the second there was a much more merciless temper. The army was losing its patience. It lost it still more fully when, the danger over, Parliament and the king began again upon the old Penelope's web of negotiations, and the arrangement called the Newport Treaty was under discussion. Not the rank and file only, but the heads of the army, with the exception of Fairfax, had come to the conclusion that the time for patience and argument had gone; even before setting out for the campaign, 'we came to a very clear resolution that it was our duty, if ever the Lord brought us back again in peace, to call Charles Stewart, that man of blood, to an account for the blood he had shed.' On November 20, 1648, the army sent Parliament a remonstrance, demanding the rupture of negotiations with the king, and his punishment 'as the author of all our troubles.' Cromwell too had now been brought to this conclusion: his hesitations and willingness for compromise were over; he had ceased to be afraid of 'force'; and he was a man who, once his mind was made up, never wavered in carrying out his resolve.

But first Parliament must be dealt with. When it resolved to continue negotiations with the king, Colonel Pride and a party of musketeers came down and excluded all but fifty or sixty members (December 1648). Cromwell would have preferred a forcible dissolution and a new election; but he accepted the accomplished fact, and devoted himself to driving through the arraignment and trial of the king.

In William Rufus' great hall at Westminster, which had witnessed so many events in English history, on the 10th of January 1649, a scene took place the like of which had never taken place in England, or in any other country. An anointed king was arraigned before a body of judges empowered to try him for his life on a charge of treason against

the nation. No law known to Englishmen justified such an act. Those who conducted it were not judges of the realm, but an *ex parte* body appointed for the purpose, whose decision was determined beforehand. Those who appointed them were not representatives of the nation, but the remnant of an assembly which, even before it was purged, had long ceased to be representative. The king, who bore himself with a quiet dignity which became him better than any other act of his life, refused throughout to recognise the authority of the court, and declined to plead. But he made it plain that, standing before a court which was no court, it was he, now, who was the defender of the rudiments of justice and of law against mere brute force and arbitrary power. 'It is not my case alone, it is the freedom and liberty of the people of England. . . . For if power without law may make laws . . . I do not know what subject he is in England that can be sure of his life or anything that he calls his own. . . .'

He was sentenced, as was indeed determined: he was refused the right to speak, when he asked for it, after sentence given. But some even of his stern judges had to be kept to their duty by the iron will of Cromwell and his friends, and outside a sort of horror held the nation. On January 30, on a cold frosty morning, the heir of a hundred kings stepped forth from the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall on to a black-draped platform, where, near a low block, stood two masked men in close-fitting frocks. Ranks of soldiers stood around, horse and foot, and behind them, and in all the windows and on all the roofs, a thronging mass of silent men and women. The king spoke to those near about him, stating his view of the causes of the war. 'For the people,' he went on, 'I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whatsoever: but I must tell you that their liberty and freedom consists in having government, in those LAWS by which their life and goods may be most their own. It is not their having a share in government; that is nothing pertaining to them. . . . If I could have given way to have all changed according to the power of the sword, I needed not to have come here; and therefore I tell you (and I pray God it be not laid to your charge) that I am the martyr of the people.'

He lay down quietly, and lay for a moment praying; then stretched forth his hands, and the head was severed with one blow. It was raised for the people to see; whereupon one groan burst from the thousands round the scaffold:

'such a groan,' writes one who was present, 'as I never heard before, and desire I may never hear again.'

A few days later was published a moving little book, called the *Eikon Basilike* or Royal Image. It purported to represent the thoughts and reflections of the doomed king in the last days of his life. Read by hundreds of thousands, it drove into the mind of the greater part of the nation the pity and horror which the scene at Whitehall had caused. The king's death had sanctified the cause of royalty, and identified it with justice against mere force.

Liberty rests upon law, as the king had said; and, for all his faults, he spoke truly when he made that clear. Mere force cannot make right; it may poison even a good cause. To this had come the revolution which started with the resolute insistence upon the sovereignty of law. With this augury the Puritan Republic started upon its short and troubled history.

[The standard history of the Civil War is S. R. Gardiner's, in four volumes. Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion* is one of the greatest pieces of English historical writing; it is also the work of a participator, on the royalist side. On the other side see Lucy Hutchinson's *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson* and Ludlow's *Memoirs*, also Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*. For the more advanced movements Pease's *Leveller Movement*, Simpkinson's *Harrison*, and Brown's *Fifth Monarchists*.]

CHAPTER VII

THE PURITAN REPUBLIC AND THE PROTECTORATE

(A.D. 1649-1658)

§ 1. *The Situation in* 1649.

THE execution of the king was a sudden and violent breach with the traditions of English government; the breach was made yet more complete when the surviving fragment of the House of Commons proceeded to declare, by its own sole authority, the abolition of the monarchy and of the House of Lords (February 1649). Of the traditional organs of government which the nation was accustomed to obey, and whose existence was implied in the rules and practices of every law court and every administrative body in the land, nothing now remained save the House of Commons, which ten years earlier had seemed to be the least indispensable part of the system; and the name and authority of the House of Commons were arrogated by a usurping minority, who excluded the majority from their places, and depended for their own existence solely upon the support of the army: that is to say, upon brute force.

Yet this body, which had assumed to itself all the functions of government and exercised a power more irresponsible and tyrannical than any English king had ever enjoyed, based its claims upon the assertion of the principle of popular sovereignty and upon its own representative character. 'England shall henceforth be governed as a Commonwealth or free State,' ran an Act passed in May 1649, 'by the supreme authority of this nation, the representatives of the people in Parliament'; and the new Great Seal bore the legend—'In the first year of freedom by God's blessing restored.' What they meant by 'a free State,' the Parliament did not explain: since the king himself, on the scaffold, had claimed to be a martyr for the freedom of the State, it is evident that 'freedom' may have many different meanings. In the declaration of their reasons for proclaiming a republic, Parliament asserted that kings were only officials, established by the agreement of the people, who had the

right to dethrone them; and it tacitly assumed that it alone could speak for the people. John Milton, who became one of the secretaries of the Council of State, declared 'that all men were naturally born free,' and asserted that the 'contract' on which all governments rested was invalidated by misrule. These were lofty assertions of principle. But between them and the actual facts there was a very awkward contradiction; for the actual facts were that the new rulers of England were an irresponsible oligarchy, supported against a hostile nation only by military power, and that if they were to submit themselves to popular election and accept its results their power could not survive for a moment.

This contrast between the assertion of high democratic principles, and the impossibility of putting them into practice in a nation which was not ready to accept them and hated their advocates, stultified all the most enlightened acts of the Commonwealth, as the same contradiction has stultified one violent revolution after another. It brought it about that, in the search for a stable foundation for government, the revolutionaries, struggle as they might, found themselves forced, step by step, to return towards the old system; and in the end, of all the work of the Long Parliament, the only part that survived was that which was achieved in its first session, before brute force was adopted as an argument. The lessons of this experience long had very great weight in British politics.

This failure was not due to any lack of force or ability on the part of the republican government, for their actions were both vigorous and successful. In January 1649, they seemed to be in an almost hopeless and impossible position. The royalists, more than half of the active part of the nation, were their irreconcilable foes. They had definitely alienated the great mass of neutral and indifferent opinion, which became more and more hostile as men found themselves subject to an unprecedented burden of taxation, and interfered with in their ordinary habits of life. The Presbyterians, who formed much the greater part of the Puritan minority, especially in London and the towns, were almost as irreconcilable as the royalists, and were indeed becoming royalists themselves. Even among the very small minority of extreme Puritans there were deep divisions. Some condemned Pride's Purge and the king's execution as outrages against justice and liberty. On the other hand, some desired to establish 'the rule of the saints' and would have liked to limit the privileges of citizenship,

as in New England, to pious and orthodox Puritans of their own shade of belief. There were also genuinely democratic elements, especially in the army; these were indignant because new elections on a democratic basis were not at once held, and they sent demands in this sense to the Parliament. Some of them, like Lilburn, denounced Cromwell as a tyrant, an apostate and a hypocrite. They had to be firmly dealt with: 'break them or they will break you,' said Cromwell; and four of them were imprisoned in the Tower by the Council of State, quite as high-handedly as Charles I. and Laud had imprisoned their opponents, and with less show of legal right. In May 1649 there was an alarming mutiny in three regiments, but Fairfax and Cromwell dealt with it promptly, and shot three of the ringleaders.

While the position of the new government was precarious in England, it was seriously threatened both from Scotland and from Ireland. The Scots, indignant at the illegal execution of a Scottish king, and at the overthrow of the Presbyterian cause in England, were already in treaty with Charles II., now in exile, who after much wriggling accepted the hard terms they imposed on him and landed in Scotland in the summer of 1650. In Ireland the king's execution changed the whole situation. The royalists, who had submitted to Parliament in 1647, raised their heads again, and Ormond made a league with the Catholics; even the Scots in the north would have nothing to do with the regicides. For a moment Ireland was a united nation, as she had never been before; the parliamentary garrisons fell one by one, until only Dublin was left, and Dublin was only preserved by the irrepressible vigour of Michael Jones, who saved it by striking at Rathmines (August 3, 1649) a lively blow against Ormond's attacking forces. A royalist fleet under Prince Rupert—the same which had revolted in 1648—was making its base at Kinsale; and Charles II. was expected to arrive in Ireland—was on his way, indeed, when Cromwell's victories made him turn towards Scotland instead.

On the Continent every State was hostile to the murderers of the king: and this was the more serious because the Thirty Years' War was now over, though war between France and Spain still continued. English envoys were murdered in Holland and Spain, almost with public approbation. There was a real possibility that some of the continental powers would help Charles II. to regain his throne. That was the condition of things in 1649. By 1652 all the

world had become respectful, and eager for English friendship. The contrast is the measure of the vigour and success of the new government and its army. But no vigour and no success could cure the fundamental falsity of their position.

§ 2. *The Security of the Republic Established.*

The first danger to be dealt with was that of Ireland. On March 30, 1649, Cromwell was appointed Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. On August 13 (having previously sent reinforcements to Michael Jones) he landed at Dublin with twelve thousand men.[1] He came with the fixed resolve not merely to remove a danger to the Commonwealth, but to wreak a terrible vengeance for 'the innocent blood that had been shed' in 1641, of which, like all his contemporaries, he had a wholly exaggerated view. He was to be 'the minister of God's justice.' He first turned northwards against Drogheda, one of the recent captures of the royalists, into which Ormond had thrown the flower of his army. The town was stormed on September 10, and the whole garrison put to the sword, together with every priest. Next he turned south against Wexford, where his action was almost as unflinching: fifteen hundred of the garrison and every priest were put to death. These merciless measures had their effect in creating terror. People, wrote Ormond, were 'so stupefied, that it is with great difficulty I can persuade them to act anything like men towards their own preservation.' Town after town surrendered, and Ormond's men deserted in droves. The spell was partly broken when the stubborn resistance of Waterford compelled the siege to be raised (November). But meanwhile the various elements in the Irish confederation had begun to quarrel. The royalists of Munster made terms; the Scots in the north also submitted. By the close of 1649 the whole coast from Londonderry to Cape Clear was in Cromwell's hands. The interior and the west had still to be reconquered, and reconquest of the fortresses in Munster and part of Leinster occupied him during the spring of 1650, while in the north another army won a series of successes. In May 1650, Cromwell was recalled to England. The final subjugation of Ireland could be left to his lieutenants, who carried it out systematically during the next two years: Galway, the last place to resist, sur-

[1] For the Irish campaign see Atlas, Plate 42 (*b*).

rendered in May 1652. A war which had lasted twelve years and desolated the country was at an end; and thousands of Irishmen began to pour forth to take service in continental armies. Ireland was subjugated more completely than it had ever been under Elizabeth.

The cause of Cromwell's recall was that Charles II. had submitted to the terms dictated to him by the Scottish leaders, who were preparing to enforce his rights upon England, and at the same time to insist upon the carrying out of the Solemn League and Covenant. The gallant Montrose had indeed made, in March 1650, a desperate attempt to save his king from the abject position to which Argyll and the leaders of the Kirk insisted upon reducing him. He had landed in the Orkneys with a little body of Danish and German mercenaries. But his force had been destroyed at Carbisdale in Sutherland, and he himself had later been captured and handed over to the government, who hanged him at the market-cross in Edinburgh on a gallows thirty-eight feet high, and sent parts of his dismembered body to be displayed in various towns (May 1650). This was just about the time when Cromwell landed in England from Ireland. The Scots were preparing to invade England under Cromwell's old comrade in arms, David Leslie. Should they be allowed to do so, or be anticipated by an invasion of Scotland? Fairfax, still Commander-in-Chief, resigned his post rather than invade Scotland; and in June Cromwell became Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief of all the forces of the Commonwealth.

Following the east coast route, where the fleet could accompany and supply him, Cromwell led an army of sixteen thousand veterans to the attack against twenty-six thousand Scots.[1] At Dunbar, on September 3, 1650, he won perhaps the most brilliant of all his victories; though he was helped by the meddling of the Scottish ministers who insisted upon overriding Leslie's plans: he was in a difficult position when the battle began, and if the ministers had not insisted on an immediate attack, Cromwell might have been beaten. Master now of all the eastern Lowlands, Cromwell was anxious for a peaceful agreement. But the Scots would not yield, and their army was re-forming behind Stirling, the gateway of the Highlands. The extreme Kirk party, who were most likely to make terms, had been discredited by their meddling at Dunbar, and had lost the upper hand, so that Charles II. had become more fully master in his own

[1] For the Scottish campaign see Atlas, Plate 38 (*a*).

house. To turn the Scottish position Cromwell threw his army into Fife, across the estuary of the Forth, and captured Perth. This cut off Leslie from the north, but it left open the road to the south; and, as Cromwell had foreseen, Charles II. and the Scots resolved to seize the chance for a raid into England, hoping to get aid from English royalists. They got practically none, so firmly was England held down. But they managed to advance with increasing difficulty as far as Worcester. Cromwell, who had gathered fresh forces during the pursuit, was able to bar the road to London; and having now nearly two to one against the weary and dispirited Scots, he attacked them from two sides at Worcester (September 3, 1651), and almost annihilated them. Scarcely any of them got home. Half the nobility of Scotland were among the prisoners. Charles II. had great difficulty in escaping: troopers scoured all roads, and notices were out at the ports for the arrest of 'a tall man above two yards high' with dark hair. But for seven weeks the fugitive wandered about the country in every kind of humble disguise; of the scores he trusted not one proved false, and he escaped to France at the end of October. The romance of Charles II.'s escape, added to the tragedy of his father's death, contributed to increase the hold of the fallen monarchy over the imaginations of the English people.

Dunbar and Worcester completed the triumph of the republic. Scotland, like England and Ireland, now lay helpless before the army. She had suffered fearfully during the last years of the war, and she could not replace the army destroyed at Worcester. A force of six thousand under George Monk was sufficient to conquer the remainder of the country. In May 1652 (the same month in which the surrender of Galway ended the Irish war) Dunnottar Castle, the last Scottish fortress to hold out, also surrendered. Scotland and Ireland, both conquered countries, were at the disposal of the able and vigorous oligarchy who ruled England against its will.

Meanwhile Rupert had been swept from the seas; and a war with the Dutch, of which something will be said elsewhere,[1] showed that the republic was as vigorous on sea as on land, and that in Blake it had a sea warrior not unworthy to be the colleague in arms of Cromwell. And while these victories were being won, the administrative work of the Commonwealth was carried on with almost

[1] Chapter viii. below, p. 478.

equal efficiency, through a Council of State of forty-one members, thirty-one of whom were members of Parliament. Beyond question these men were honest and disinterested. 'They are economical in their private affairs,' wrote a French agent, 'and prodigal in their devotion to public affairs. They handle large sums of money, which they administer honestly. They reward well and punish severely.' They raised a revenue of £2,000,000 a year, three times as great as Charles I. had enjoyed before the meeting of the Long Parliament. Much of it was raised by heavy fines on royalists and by the sale of confiscated estates; but the burden of direct and indirect taxation was heavier than it had ever been, and more arbitrarily collected. It was the army and the navy which necessitated this large expenditure, despite careful economy. They were able and devoted men who carried on all this work. One of the ablest of them was Sir Henry Vane; another, more famous, was John Milton, one of the secretaries of the Council of State, and the chief defender of the republic in the pamphlet war of the time.

In addition to their other labours, Parliament undertook great reforms. They took in hand the reorganisation of the Church; and, largely guided by the Puritan divine, John Owen, wrought out (1652) a system whereunder all candidates for the ministry were examined by local commissions, partly lay and partly clerical, and admitted freely, whatever their shade of belief, Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, or even moderate Anglican; while a travelling commission moved about ejecting unfit ministers and schoolmasters. Beyond question the work was carefully done, and most of the parishes were served during this period by able and honest men. At the same time toleration was granted to all who could not accept the regular ministrations, provided that they accepted certain fundamentals of Christianity. In the same spirit a reform of the legal system was begun. Twenty-one commissioners, presided over by Matthew Hale, being empowered 'to consider the inconveniences of the law and the speediest way to remedy the same,' drafted many good bills, some of which became law during the Protectorate and lasted till the Restoration: others had to wait till the nineteenth century.

But not even the greatest efficiency and devotion could overcome the fundamental vice of the government of the Rump, as the remnant of the Long Parliament was called.

They claimed to represent the nation, but they represented only a fraction of it; and even that fraction, even the army on which their whole power rested, was not content to accept an unchanging oligarchy with no legal basis for its power.

§ 3. *The Attempt to find a New System of Government.*

All through the three years following the death of Charles I. agitation went on about the problem of government. It came to a head when the subjugation of Ireland and Scotland removed the immediate dangers of the republic. Now at last, it might seem, the discrepancy between theory and practice might safely be removed. But the Rump was slow to abandon a power which it enjoyed exercising; also its members knew, better than many of the enthusiastic democrats who criticised them, that any attempt to translate theory into practice would lead to chaos. The most that the Rump would do was to propose that the present house should continue, the members not submitting to re-election, but that vacancies should be filled up, the existing Parliament being the judge of the eligibility of all persons elected. And this system they proposed as a permanency.

The army lost patience; and Cromwell, acting as their agent, came down to the house (April 20, 1653), when the bill for renewing the Rump was about to pass, and, after listening to the debate, got up and roundly rated his fellow members: 'You are no Parliament, I say you are no Parliament. I will put an end to your sitting.' Soldiers of his own regiment were called in: the members were excluded; the Speaker and the rigid republican Algernon Sidney were removed with a show of force. Catching sight of the mace, the emblem of the legal authority of Parliament, 'What shall we do with this bauble?' he cried, and then, calling a soldier, 'Here, take it away.' So ended the last semblance of legal authority in England. Bare, naked force alone maintained the State in existence.

What should take the place of the disbanded house? What was to be the new frame of the government of England? That was for Cromwell and his soldiers to decide; there was no other authority in England. A free appeal to the electorate was out of the question. But among the leading soldiers there were two views, and Cromwell swayed between the two. One was the view of Lambert, the most political of the soldiers. He held that a Parliament should be

elected, that there should also be a small administrative council, and that their respective powers, and also the permanence of the whole system, should be defended by a written constitution, from which there should be no appeal: this seemed the only safeguard against the obstinate persistence of the traditions of the old constitution. The other view was represented by Harrison, a brave man but an illiterate fanatic, leader of the Fifth Monarchy men, who held that the four monarchies of Assyria, Persia, Macedonia and Rome having all fallen, the Fifth Monarchy, that of Christ, was now to begin: their favourite text was, 'The saints shall take the kingdom and possess it.' There was a practical vein in Cromwell which made him distrust paper constitutions. There was also a mystical vein in him, to which the idea of the rule of the saints made some appeal: ever since the execution of Charles I. he had talked more than usual about God's judgments, which he saw in every victory.

The result was that an experiment was made in Harrison's direction. One hundred and forty persons, all Puritan notables, including five from Scotland and six from Ireland, were invited to become members of an assembly which was to undertake the rule of the Commonwealth: it is the assembly known from one of its members as Barebone's Parliament. Cromwell welcomed it (July 4, 1653) in an extraordinary outburst of half-mystical enthusiasm. The rule of the saints had been brought about by the manifest guidance of God. 'I never looked to see such a thing as this. . . . This may be the door to usher in the things that God hath promised and prophesied of. . . . Indeed, I do think somewhat is at the door. We are at the threshold.'

But alas! The saints were not very practical rulers, though they did not go quite so far as the Fifth Monarchy men, who would have had them abolish all the laws of England and substitute the Mosaic code. They started to do everything at once, and put everything in confusion. And meanwhile the Levellers were denouncing Cromwell for not having called a real elected Parliament. The practical side of Cromwell's nature reasserted itself. There was a moderate party even in Barebone's Parliament. They held an early meeting (Dec. 12) before the enthusiasts could come, and hastily resolved that the further sitting of this Parliament 'will not be for the good of the Commonwealth, and that therefore it is requisite to deliver up to the Lord-General Cromwell the powers which they received from him.' Cromwell accepted the resignation with relief. The experi-

ment had lasted only five months and four days. But once more, no power in existence save the power of the sword!

The next attempt at a solution was Lambert's scheme of a written and unalterable constitution, under which it might be safe to elect a Parliament. Lambert drafted the constitution, which was known as the *Instrument of Government*; and Cromwell accepted it. It was not a bad piece of constitution-making. But it is not hard to make a constitution: the difficulty is to make it part of the life of a nation. The striking feature of the Instrument was that it was obviously modelled upon the old constitution of England. It had 'something monarchical in it,' which Cromwell had always said was necessary; for there was to be a Protector at the head of the executive government, performing very much the same duties as had fallen to the king, assisted by a Council of State which would correspond to the Privy Council, and the Protector was to have a fixed yearly revenue with which Parliament was not to be able to interfere, sufficient to enable him to meet all the ordinary expenses of government—that had been Charles I.'s position in theory. Parliament was to meet once in three years (as the Long Parliament had defined), and might be dissolved after only five months: there was therefore to be no such permanent control of the executive by Parliament as the Long Parliament had desired. Moreover the powers of Parliament were limited: it was prohibited from passing laws that conflicted with the 'constitution,' which is just what Charles I. had complained that his parliaments insisted upon doing. Before the meeting of Parliament the Protector was to have the power of issuing ordinances—just as the Stewarts had issued proclamations. Finally, as a safeguard, the franchise was altered: in the counties, only owners of property worth £200 were to vote. This was far from the system desired by the Levellers.

Cromwell was solemnly installed as Protector in December 1653—dressed in a black coat, to show that military rule was over. Parliament did not meet till September 1654, and in the meanwhile Cromwell exercised freely his power of making ordinances. Some of the most distinctive parts of his domestic policy were thus effected without parliamentary concurrence. But when Parliament did meet, the Protector found it as troublesome as ever Charles I. had done. For the elected members felt that by the fact of election they had an authority behind them far superior to that upon which the Instrument of Government rested; and they

insisted upon revising its terms. Why should a junto of officers presume to tie for ever the hands of the representatives of the people? About 100 members were excluded for refusing to promise not to alter the main features of the system; Charles I. had never gone so far. But those who remained still went on with these discussions, and in particular proposed to reduce the size of the army. At the very earliest day permitted by the Instrument of Government—counting four weeks to the month—the Protector got rid of his Parliament as eagerly as ever did Charles I.

He was faced indeed by a threatened series of risings, which had been stimulated by the evidence that the conquerors were divided—risings of the Scots, of the Cavaliers, of the Levellers, of the Fifth Monarchy men: such a series of threats to government as Charles I. had never known even at the height of his personal rule, though he had had no army to overawe the country. They were all crushed in the bud, save a rising in Scotland and a little outbreak of Cavaliers in England, both of which were easily dealt with. But they gave excuse for an extension of military rule which brought more odium upon the Protectorate than any other of its acts. England was divided into ten districts, each of which was placed in charge of a major-general with elaborate powers of police investigation, and instructions to enforce the laws relating to public morals. The major-generals overrode in a large degree the whole system of local self-government, with which there had, hitherto, been no interference. They had military force at their command, and their expenses were paid by a ten per cent. income tax on the hard-pressed royalists. England got such a taste of autocratic military rule from the major-generals as she did not for a long time forget. She learnt to hate the very idea of a standing army.

To add to the troubles, the lawyers began to question the validity of Cromwell's ordinances, as Sir Edward Coke had once questioned the validity of the proceedings of the prerogative courts; and a merchant named Cony, imitating that once popular hero Bate, of Impositions fame, refused to pay customs duties not imposed by Parliament. More high-handed than James or Charles, but precisely in their manner, Cromwell replaced the obstinate judges by men who agreed with him, and locked Cony's lawyers up in the Tower. To this had come the movement which began by asserting the supremacy of law over mere power, the control of taxation by Parliament, the iniquity of arbitrary imprisonment, and

the independence of judges! 'What is it you would have?' Cromwell once asked of the unbending republican Ludlow. 'That which we fought for,' said Ludlow, 'that the nation might be governed by its own consent.' 'I am as much for government by consent as any man,' the Protector wearily answered. '*But where shall we find that consent?*'

There was the difficulty. It is not enough, for freedom, that you should desire things which you believe to be good, and use power for their enforcement: there must be consent, and consent is not easily given by the mass of unthinking men once the rules and methods to which they are accustomed have been overturned. Seeking still for the 'consent,' without which his rule, for all its efficiency, was futile, Cromwell summoned another Parliament for 1656, still under the Instrument of Government—trusting to the major-generals to pack it with well-disposed members. What storms timid attempts in this direction had produced under James I.! But the major-generals were quite unsuccessful. Many opposition members were elected: Cromwell simply excluded a hundred of them. Even so, when Parliament met the major-generals were vigorously attacked, and the ten per cent. tax on the royalists was condemned as an unjust breach of faith.

Whither the feelings of Parliament were tending was shown by the introduction of a resolution begging Cromwell to accept the crown. Even in this carefully chosen Puritan house, though there was no wish to bring back the Stewarts such as there was outside, and no personal hostility to Cromwell, such as was producing a whole series of plots against his life, there was a longing to get back to the old ways, to known laws, to easily understood traditional authority. In spite of republican opposition, a bill for the revision of the constitution and the revival of monarchy, under the name of the *Humble Petition and Advice*, was carried by no less than two votes to one (March 1657). Cromwell was moved. Here was a prospect of some sort of 'consent.' 'It is time,' he said to his officers, 'to come to a settlement, and to lay aside arbitrary proceedings so unacceptable to the nation.' But the opposition of the army was too strong. Not without reluctance—a reluctance due not to personal ambition but to the longing for settlement and 'consent' and the return to normal conditions—Cromwell refused to take the title of King. But he agreed to the establishment of a House of Lords nominated by himself, and in other respects to as near an approximation to the old system as

might be. He was once more installed as Protector (June 1657), this time wearing a robe of purple velvet and ermine ; and the old-time heralds in their tabards made proclamation of his accession in the old-time way, to the sound of trumpets. At last he had got a constitutional basis for his power : he rested not upon the mandate of the army, but upon the election of Parliament.

But alas ! the new constitution was as unworkable as the old. It was no longer possible to exclude members : the new constitution gave Parliament, like the parliaments of Charles I., control over its own membership. The excluded members returned, and Cromwell's own supporters were depleted by the appointment of many of them to the new second chamber. The house insisted upon discussing the new constitution all over again : why should it not ? It quarrelled with the new second chamber : had not such a body long ago been declared unnecessary ? And here it had the ominous support of the army. This unsettlement could not be permitted. Like Charles I. when the Petition of Right Parliament challenged his authority, Cromwell came down and upbraided the Commons, and declared the Parliament dissolved (Feb. 1658). He never met a Parliament again. He had failed to get ' consent,' and in the few months of life that still remained to him, he must have known that what he had striven for had failed.

We have dwelt especially upon this consistent failure of a highly efficient government to secure the public support without which it could not exist, even with all its military strength, because this is indeed the most significant aspect of the history of the Commonwealth. It taught a lesson of permanent value : the lesson that in a community which has once acquired the habit of self-government, no efficiency, not even the highest degree of enlightenment, can achieve permanent success if it runs counter to the will and sentiment of the nation, if it does not win for itself ' consent.' Napoleon, whose position was in many ways like that of Cromwell, got the consent of France to a system even more arbitrary than Cromwell's ; but only because the French people had not acquired the habit of self-government, which long practice had rooted in the English. Because it lacked this essential foundation, all the best work of the republic and the Protector was ephemeral, and had to be done over again : the only part of it which was lasting was the bad part, the part that created new or intensified old bitternesses,

§ 4. *The Achievements of the Republic and the Protectorate.*

Yet in some respects the work of this period was extraordinarily enlightened, and far ahead of its age. In two ways it made great contributions to the growth of freedom. The restriction upon printing which had been taken for granted as an essential power of government, not only in England but in almost all countries, ever since the invention of printing, had broken down when the prerogative courts by which it was maintained were abolished in 1641, and it was never fully re-established. All through this period there was an unceasing stream of political writing, often extremely able, which contributed immensely to stimulate political thinking throughout the nation, and largely accounted for the rapid development of ideas and theories which distinguished the period. Milton's noble tracts [1] are the only products of this activity which are still read, but Milton was only one of many. John Lilburn alone wrote about one hundred pamphlets, and these and other writings of his school largely anticipated the revolutionary thought of the eighteenth century. The political newspaper owes its origin to this period. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of all this upon the mind of a nation already the most active politically of any in the world. And though there was a return to the old restrictions under the Restoration, the free press, for which Milton so nobly pled, had become so essential a thing in the minds of Englishmen that no restrictions were of any avail, or lasted more than a generation.

Again, both the Republic and the Protectorate made a real advance towards religious toleration, a cause for which Cromwell cared more than any other, and on which Milton wrote some of his noblest verse and prose. It is true that Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism were both excepted from the full benefits of religious freedom, on the ground that they were politically dangerous. But many Anglicans were allowed to retain their livings, and to use portions of the Prayer-book: many little congregations met in private houses, unmolested by government; even in London the use of Anglican services and ceremonies was winked at, except when royalist plots were afoot. Even the Roman Catholics were less troubled than they had been, and Cromwell could justly claim, in a despatch to the French Government, that he had eased the situation for them. He would

[1] Especially *Areopagitica*, a sublime argument for a free press.

have gone further, but public opinion was too hostile. To the Jews also, and to the Quakers (whom the Rump had persecuted) he showed an unwonted indulgence; the return of the Jews to England, from which they had been banished since Edward I., dates from the Protectorate. The Instrument of Government and the Humble Petition and Advice both made a modified toleration a fundamental principle of their systems, and it was something that the idea should have been publicly recognised; and the Protector was yet more lenient than the laws. But perhaps the greatest contribution of the period to the growth of religious freedom was the mere fact of the creation of organised sects. Public opinion was slow to accept the idea of full toleration; no government could go far ahead of public opinion, and in the next period there was a great set-back. Yet even in the next period it was impossible to disregard the existence of the sects. They might be, and were, exposed to very serious restrictions, but they remained members of the community, and could not be crushed out. Henceforward the ideal of an enforced uniformity of practice and belief in a single national church became impracticable, and that fact in itself ensured the gradual growth of a real practice of toleration.

Not the least important of the achievements of this time, more especially under the Protectorate, was the attempt to reform the procedure of English law. The process had been begun by the Rump. Cromwell carried out a valuable series of reforms in the cumbrous procedure of the Court of Chancery, and endeavoured to get rid of the monstrous severities which disgraced the English criminal law. 'To see men lose their lives for petty matters,' he told Parliament, 'is a thing God will reckon; and I wish it may not be laid on the nation a day longer than you have opportunity to give a remedy.' But Cromwell's reforms were handicapped at the time by the resistance of the lawyers, who made difficulties about recognising his ordinances; they all disappeared at the Restoration, not having been made by a legal authority, and it was not until the nineteenth century that they were carried into effect.

The most remarkable political achievement of the republic was the complete union of Ireland and Scotland in a single State with England. Scottish and Irish members sat in each of the parliaments of the Protectorate, including Barebone's Parliament, and there was a close assimilation both of the ecclesiastical system and of the legal system of both countries

to that of England. But the union was imposed by force, not attained by consent; and this fact, which stultified all the achievements of the republic, destroyed the union also. It simply came to an end at the Restoration.

In Scotland there is no denying that justice was well and firmly administered, and that such order was maintained as Scotland had never known before: even the wild Highlands were tamed by garrisons. There was complete freedom of trade with England, from which the country undoubtedly profited: 'we always reckon those eight years of usurpation a time of great peace and prosperity,' wrote the Scottish historian Burnet. But the burden of taxes, though not unjustly apportioned, was heavy, and above all, every Scot felt that these boons were the gift of a foreign conqueror, and yielded no gratitude for them. All the changes in Scotland vanished at the Restoration. Here, again, good work was fruitless, because it was based on force.

If Scotland had grounds of resentment, far deeper were the resentments caused in Ireland by the policy of these years: 'the curse of Cromwell' became one of the bitterest of Irish imprecations. Yet, tragically enough, Ireland was the only field of all Cromwell's manifold activities where his work has left a permanent and ineffaceable mark; and this because his policy reflected the unhappy antipathies of his time, and carried them out with unflinching logic. Like all his contemporaries, Cromwell regarded Ireland not as a sister nation, but as a possession of England; and here alone the advocate of religious toleration allowed his policy to be governed by religious venom. His aim was completely to Anglicise Ireland, by filling the country with godly Englishmen. The reconquest of the country, which was so thorough that it lay in his hands to be moulded, seemed to give him the chance of effecting this aim, by justifying a wholesale confiscation of all the landed property of the Irish Catholics, and rendering possible a scheme of colonisation more drastic than even Elizabeth or James I. or Wentworth had ever contemplated.

Cromwell tried to remove the whole Irish Catholic population to Connaught, and did almost succeed in limiting to that province Irish ownership of land. Two-thirds of the land of Ireland changed hands, and the process whereby the Irish were turned into hewers of wood and drawers of water on the land which their ancestors had owned was unflinchingly carried out, so far as irresistible power could achieve it. But the Irish population could not be extruded: they still re-

mained as labourers and tenants on the estates of others in all parts of the country. Within a generation the new settlers, among them many of Cromwell's old soldiers, had (despite all prohibitions) married Irish wives, and had children who became 'more Irish than the Irish,' and Catholic like their neighbours, everywhere save in Ulster. The spasmodic and ineffective religious persecution of the previous period was replaced by a systematic hunting down of priests, though no attempt was made to punish laymen for being Catholics or to force them to attend Protestant services. Cromwell hoped for much from missionary enterprise and assiduous preaching: he brought in many preachers, appealing to New England for recruits. His hope was wholly vain: Ireland remained staunchly Catholic, all the more because Catholicism had become the symbol of nationality.

Ireland, like Scotland, enjoyed under Cromwell's rule the advantage of complete freedom of trade with England, and profited from it; she enjoyed also the real benefit of a competent and cheap administration of justice. But these boons were nothing in comparison with the indelible crime of attempting to wipe out the traditions and customs of a whole nation, and the blunder of supposing that any nation of men with memories and imaginations could be treated 'as a clean paper' (to use Cromwell's phrase), on which the hand of a master might write whatever he desired. The Cromwellian policy in Ireland contributed enormously to the creation of that heritage of bitterness which has made the Irish problem almost insoluble. Here again, and here more than anywhere, force was proved to be no remedy.

[Trevelyan's and Montague's books, already referred to; Firth's *Life of Cromwell*; Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Cromwell*; Gardiner's *Cromwell's Place in History*, and his *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, with continuation by Firth; Masson's *Life of Milton*; Ranke's *History of England principally in the 17th Century*. For the constitutional devices of the time see Jenks' *Constitutional Experiments of the Commonwealth*. Gardiner's *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* gives the actual enactments. For Ireland, Dunlop's chapter in the Cambridge Modern History and his *Ireland under the Commonwealth*; for Scotland, Hume Brown and Lang.]

CHAPTER VIII

THE PURITAN REPUBLIC AND THE OUTER WORLD

§ 1. *Naval and Colonial Policy; the Dutch War.*

THOUGH all the constitutional projects of the Puritan republic ended in failure, there was one of its achievements which was of supreme and lasting significance to the development of the whole British Commonwealth. It practically created the navy as a permanent, organised fighting force, and won for England a command of the highways of the sea which was never afterwards to be wholly lost, and which was to form one of the chief factors in the world-wide distribution of the British peoples and their institutions, and in the maintenance of their unity.

The sea war under Elizabeth had been carried on in the main by private adventurers. Even the fleet which defeated the Spanish Armada, though its backbone was provided by a few Queen's ships, consisted chiefly of private vessels, and its most famous captains were not officers of the navy, but private adventurers. The royal navy had never been strong enough to fight a big battle without the aid of merchant ships. Charles I. deserves the credit of having begun to build a fleet of war powerful enough to hold the seas by itself, and it was from ship-money that he drew the means for building it. Ship-money created the powerful fleet which went over to the parliamentary side at the beginning of the civil war, and by holding the seas helped to ensure the defeat of its creator. But the fleet under Charles I. and during the civil war was still ill-organised and ill-managed. The republic turned it into a magnificent fighting force, provided it with an efficient organisation, and doubled its numbers; no less than 207 ships were added to the navy during the eleven years from 1649. What is even more important, the rulers of the republic (notably Sir Henry Vane) did away with the old system which had left the management of the fleet to a Lord High Admiral of noble rank, and for the first time called into consultation

a group of experts and fighting seamen, the nucleus of the future Admiralty.

The managers of the navy found a sea-warrior of the highest quality in Robert Blake,[1] who had been a soldier till middle life, and yet ranks among the three or four greatest English admirals. There were others also who did valiant work—Ayscue and Penn and the amphibious Monk.[2] The Council of State was wise enough to take some of these men into counsel in regard to its building programme, its naval strategy, and the great reforms in the manning, victualling and pay of the fleet which it carried into effect.

What compelled the Rump to give its serious attention to the navy after the execution of Charles I. was that, in the first place, part of the fleet (only nine ships) had gone over to the royalist side in 1648, and was now, under Prince Rupert, doing great damage to trade and helping Ormond in Ireland; and, in the second place, that all the European powers were hostile, while some of them, notably France, were expressing their hostility by privateering at the expense of English merchant ships. Now that the Thirty Years' War was over, and the sons of the late king were welcomed abroad, even a foreign invasion did not seem out of the question; and the function of the navy in guarding the inviolate island became more obvious in face of a hostile world.

Blake's first task was to deal with the small royalist squadron under Prince Rupert. He drove them from their Irish base at Kinsale (1649). He blockaded them for seven months in Lisbon harbour (1650), when they took refuge there. In doing so, he had to defy Portugal, and he fought and sank a Portuguese fleet in the middle of a gale. Then he pursued Rupert into the Mediterranean and for the time being scattered his fleet there (1650). The blockade of Lisbon was the first systematic operation of the kind carried out on a large scale by the English navy; and the raid into the Mediterranean Sea for the first time displayed the flag of the English navy in these waters, where so many of its great exploits were to be achieved. These deeds did as much as Cromwell's victories to establish the prestige and the security of the new government. They made it plain that in the navy there was a force that must be reckoned with. The English navy, now a formidable standing force, had become a factor in European politics as never before.

[1] There is a good short life of Blake by David Hannay.
[2] See Corbett's *Monk* in the English Men of Action Series.

In another sphere also the navy enabled the rulers of the Puritan republic to assert the power of England. Despite their troubles at home, they had no intention of relaxing their hold over the colonies which had been founded during the previous half century. Indeed, it was under this government that a systematic colonial policy first began to appear in British history, for James I. and Charles I. had left the American and West Indian settlements very much to themselves. And it was the navy which enabled the new government to hold these scattered territories together, and to make them feel the community of their interests with those of the mother country.

At the moment of the king's execution there seemed a real danger that all the colonies would break away and either become independent States, or fall under the control of the Dutch. The New England colonies were already practically independent, appointing even their own governors. Sympathy with their fellow Puritans brought them during the period of the Republic into closer relations with the mother country; though one Bostonian feared that Cromwell was 'wanting in a thorough testimony against the blasphemers of our days'—the policy of toleration being a mere iniquity in the eyes of New England. On the whole the Rump and the Protector were very tender in their dealings with New England, the Puritan garrison in North America. Cromwell drew preachers thence for Ireland, and even invited settlers for that unhappy land. Yet we find him granting a charter to Rhode Island, the colony which its New England neighbours disliked because it indulged in the vice of toleration, and rebuking Massachusetts for 'the want of good feeling between men who had so much in common.'

But in the southern colonies, Virginia and Maryland, and in the West Indian colonies, a more direct exercise of authority was necessary. Virginia had proclaimed Charles II. as soon as the news of the death of Charles I. arrived, and punished those who upheld the execution; Barbados, Antigua and St. Kitts refused to acknowledge the republic and banished its supporters, and Barbados seemed about to declare its independence. The navy ended this: Sir George Ayscue being sent out to Barbados, Virginia and Maryland to enforce recognition (1652).

When they surveyed the colonial problem the statesmen of the Commonwealth—some of them, like Sir Henry Vane, being men who had colonial experience—were especially impressed by the fact that relatively little colonial trade

actually passed through England. England had to be responsible for the defence of the colonies, but seemed to get nothing in return. In all the colonies, and especially in the West Indies, Dutch shipping was getting nearly all the trade. It was stated that at Barbados ten Dutch ships were seen for one English. To mend this state of things, to strengthen the ties between the colonies and the mother country, and at the same time to develop the English mercantile marine, the Rump passed in 1651 a very important Act which was the beginning of a new era in colonial policy. This was the *Navigation Act*. It provided that no goods should be exported from England to the colonies or imported thence to England except in English-built or colonial-built ships, belonging to English subjects, having English or colonial captains and a crew at least three-fourths English or colonial; it also provided that no foreign goods should be imported into England or the colonies except in English or colonial ships, or ships belonging to the country from which the goods came. This Act struck a direct blow at the preponderance of the Dutch in the trade of the English colonies. It aroused for a time keen opposition in the colonies, in spite of the fact that it gave to colonial shipping the same privileges as to English; because the Dutch were able to charge cheaper freights than the English trader, and there was not at first sufficient English shipping to take the place of the Dutch. But the Act very greatly stimulated the striking growth of English and colonial shipping which marked this and the following period.

The Navigation Act brought to a height the ill-feeling between the English and the Dutch which had been growing since the beginning of the century; and, though it was not the sole cause, it undoubtedly contributed to the outbreak of war between the two Protestant sea powers, once allies against Spain, which took place in 1652. This was the first purely naval war fought out in a series of fleet actions, and it saw the beginning of modern naval tactics. It seems to have been Blake, at the battle of the Gabbards, who first introduced the line-ahead formation in battle which became the regular practice of the English fleet. The rivals in this naval war were fairly well matched. Both had great fleets of warships, though the English fleet was somewhat the larger, thanks to the assiduous building of Charles I. and the Parliament; and the English ships seem on the whole to have been more solidly built than the Dutch, and could stand

more battering. Both peoples fought with real knowledge and experience of the conditions of sea warfare. Both had able commanders: Tromp the Dutchman was perhaps an even greater admiral than Blake, and the Dutch had an ampler sea experience than the English.

But the Dutch suffered from two great disadvantages. They had an immensely larger mercantile marine to expose to the ravages of war, and the islands lay right across the path which all these ships must follow on their way to and from their home ports. Moreover, the Dutch were dependent almost for their existence upon their over-sea trade, to an extent to which there was no comparison on the English side. 'The English are about to attack a mountain of gold,' said a Dutch ambassador on the eve of war: 'we are about to attack a mountain of iron.' The Dutch losses in prizes captured by the English fleet during the course of the war were extremely serious: the value of these prizes alone was something like double that of the whole ocean-going mercantile marine of England. These losses crippled Dutch trade, and proportionately strengthened the growth of English trade.

Eight great sea battles were fought during the two years 1652 and 1653:[1] hard-fought pitched battles of whole fleets. The most important fights of the first year were the battle of Kentish Knock (Sept. 1652), off the mouth of the Thames, in which the Dutch admiral de Witt was beaten down by sheer weight of metal and good gunnery, and retired with the loss of two ships; and the battle of Dungeness, in the following November, in which Blake, weakened by the detachment of twenty ships to the Mediterranean, and outnumbered by two to one, was very severely defeated, so that the English for a time lost command of the Channel.

But the government took this disaster to heart, carried out a vigorous reorganisation, and sent to sea next year a finer fleet than ever. From this fleet Tromp, convoying a big merchant fleet, only escaped with difficulty, after a fierce fight three days long off Portland, in which he lost nine ships (Feb. 1653); and in the following May, off the Gabbard Shoal, east of Harwich, the biggest battle of the war, between 98 ships under Tromp and 100 under Blake, ended in a complete English victory, in which twenty Dutch ships were captured. This triumph was followed up by a severe blockade of the Dutch coast, which for a time simply

[1] See the map of the Narrow Seas, Atlas, Plate 45 (*a*).

stopped Dutch trade. In an attempt to break the blockade, the Dutch challenged a fresh fight off Scheveningen at the end of July, which turned out to be the last great battle of the war. The English fleet under Monk gained a complete victory, and the great Dutch admiral, Tromp, was killed. But for the moment the blockade was broken, because so many English ships were damaged that the fleet had to retire to refit.

The Dutch were by no means crushed by this fierce series of engagements. But the losses they had suffered were so heavy that they were glad to make peace (1654) : a peace which may be said to end the period of Dutch naval supremacy, though two more wars were to be fought in the next period between the same foes. The treaty tacitly accepted the English Act of Navigation. Its most striking feature was that the Dutch undertook to pay compensation for the massacre of Amboyna, thirty years before.

§ 2. *Cromwell's Foreign Policy and the War with Spain.*

The peace was actually signed not by the Government of the Rump, which had begun the war, but by the Government of the Protectorate. Cromwell had been anxious to end the struggle, because it was his first aim in foreign policy to form a league of Protestant powers, in which the Dutch would be an essential element. He was still under the influence of the ideas which had been prevalent at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War. But the temper of Europe had changed, and the attempt to make a Protestant League failed completely ; perhaps fortunately for Europe. Cromwell found that in the sphere of European politics the main problem which he had to decide was whether he would support France or Spain in the dreary war which was still raging between them, or whether he would stand aloof and neutral. Both powers were eager for his help : for the first time England seemed to be in a position to play the part of arbiter in a European conflict, and it was her mastery of the seas which gave her this position. France had been the more unfriendly of the two to the young republic ; she had allowed her privateers to prey freely on English shipping, and at sea there was almost a state of war between the two countries. On the other hand Spain was, in Cromwell's eyes, the ancient enemy and the bulwark of Rome, and with her too there was an almost open state of war in West Indian waters.

It would have been natural, and to the best advantage of

a country already strained by long warfare, that England should have stood aloof from these conflicts. But Cromwell was not only a militant Protestant; he was an imperialist, the first pronounced imperialist in English history—almost we may call him the first Jingo. He was resolved to increase English power overseas, and he was by no means scrupulous as to the means by which he did it. He seems even to have imagined that he could commit the most flagrant acts of aggression in distant waters, and still remain at peace in Europe with the countries he attacked. In 1654 he had sent a large fleet to America to co-operate with a land force from New England in an attack upon the Dutch colony of New Netherlands. Peace with the Dutch had come in time to stop that project. But the forces which were to have attacked the Dutch colony were deliberately turned against the French settlements in Acadia (Nova Scotia);[1] and the French forts and the whole country, including Cape Breton Island, were occupied, in spite of the fact that England was nominally at peace with France. These lands were held until they were restored by Charles II. in 1668: the French government accepting the outrage because it dared not resent it, and wished for an English alliance. It is hard to imagine a more high-handed or indefensible action: there is none to compare with it in the history of British imperialism.

Meanwhile Cromwell was negotiating with both France and Spain. From the Spanish government he demanded that English traders in Spain should be exempted from the control of the Inquisition, and that trade should be thrown open in the West Indies. That, said the Spanish ambassador, was 'to ask for his master's two eyes.' Without waiting for the conclusion of negotiations, and without a declaration of war, Cromwell resolved to make an attack on the Spanish West Indies. He fitted out a fleet of 38 ships under Admiral Penn (father of the great Quaker), and an army of 2500 men under General Venables, which was subsequently raised to 7000 by recruitments at Barbados and elsewhere. This formidable expedition, which set sail in August 1654, was designed for a deliberate attempt to conquer, as a beginning, the oldest part of the Spanish American empire, the island of Hispaniola (Hayti).[2] The attack on Hispaniola was a failure, even a disgraceful failure. But Penn and Venables attacked instead the thinly peopled island of Jamaica, and

[1] See the map of the Colonisation of North America, Atlas, Plate 54.
[2] See the map of the West Indies, Atlas, Plate 53.

conquered it (1655). Cromwell was disappointed. 'The Lord hath greatly humbled us,' he said; but he had no misgivings as to the righteousness of his action. He kept a firm hold on Jamaica against all Spanish attacks, hoping to make it a basis for the overthrow of the Spanish American empire. 'It is much designed amongst us,' he wrote to one of his Jamaica commanders, 'to strive with the Spaniard for the mastery of all these seas': another he exhorted to 'set up your banners in the name of Christ, for undoubtedly it is his cause.' The Chosen People may take liberties not permitted to others!

Spain, reduced though she was from her old greatness, was less ready than France to submit tamely to such treatment. She declared war, and the last years of Cromwell's reign were chiefly concerned with the Spanish War.

This war gave another great opportunity to the navy under Blake. Blake had been engaged during 1654 in a brilliant attack upon the pirates of Tunis and Algiers, the 'Barbary corsairs' as they were called. He had silenced the guns of Tunis, destroyed the pirate fleet there, and compelled the Dey of Algiers to release all his British captives and to concede freedom of trade to English merchants. The prestige of the navy was immensely increased by these deeds, for the Barbary corsairs had hitherto baffled every attack. In the naval war against Spain Blake's first action was to blockade Cadiz and a great part of the Spanish coast throughout the winter of 1656. The carrying out of a blockade at such a distance was a remarkable achievement, and the ascendency of the navy was still further heightened when three English ships attacked and destroyed a Spanish squadron of eight ships. In 1657, striking further afield, Blake carried out an amazingly brilliant attack upon Santa Cruz, the chief town of Teneriffe, where the annual treasure fleet of Spain was lying under the shelter of many forts. He defied the forts, destroyed the whole fleet, and drew off practically without loss. This achievement not only raised the fame of the English navy to the highest point, but seriously crippled the operations of Spain in the continental war, into which England had now also been drawn.

The episode in Cromwell's Spanish War on which emphasis is usually laid was the battle of the Dunes (June 1658), in which a contingent of English troops, co-operating with a French army under the great Turenne, played a leading part in the final and crushing defeat of Spain. For England the results of this battle were that Charles II.'s

hopes of help from Spain were shattered, and that the port of Dunkirk passed into English possession. This continental possession was valued because 'it would be a bridle to the Dutch, and a door into the Continent.' But the ideas of British policy implied in this view were unsound and dangerous. Cromwell was tending towards a reversal of that policy of withdrawal from continental entanglements which had grown stronger ever since the loss of Calais, and the cession of Dunkirk to France (1662), for which Charles II. was later bitterly blamed, was in reality a wise step which saved England from pursuing a wholly false and destructive ambition. In another aspect, the war policy of Cromwell had unhappy results. By lending English strength for the overthrow of Spain, he helped to establish the overweening power of Louis XIV. of France, which in the next generation was to threaten the liberties of Europe.

It cannot be said that the views of the dominant Puritans upon the attitude which the islands should adopt in their relations with their neighbours showed any real insight or generosity of view. But they deserve credit for two great contributions to the building of the British Commonwealth. One was their recognition of the importance of the young settlements over the seas, and of the need for putting upon a sound basis their relations with the mother country, from whom they derived their traditions of freedom, and upon whom they must depend for security in their future development. The other was the organisation of the navy, the force which was in the future to be used not merely as Cromwell had used it, for forcible aggression, but for the defence of free institutions in new lands, and for the maintenance of the freedom of the seas.

[For naval development, Laird Clowes, *History of the British Navy*, and Oppenheim, *Administration of the Royal Navy*; there is a good chapter on this period in the Cambridge Modern History, by J. R. Tanner. For contemporary European history, Wakeman, *Ascendancy of France*, and Abbott, *Expansion of Europe*. For the colonial policy of the Protectorate, Egerton, *Short History of British Colonial Policy*, Hertz's *Old Colonial System*, and Beer's *Old Colonial System*; also Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*.]

CHAPTER IX

THE COLLAPSE OF THE PURITAN REPUBLIC

(A.D. 1658-1660)

The artificial ascendency of the Puritan minority could not long survive the death of the great man who had embodied many of its highest qualities, and held in check the extravagances to which it was prone; whose resolution had faced and conquered the worst emergencies; whose faith in his cause had triumphed over discouragements; whose inherent moderation and toleration of differences had saved the sects from wrecking themselves and their country. One of the greatest of Englishmen, Cromwell was in nothing so great, and in nothing so English, as in his firm grasp of realities and his readiness to face facts. That gift must have convinced him, before his death, that there could be no permanence in the system which he had spent himself to maintain, because it did not rest upon national consent, but upon force. The danger was that the irresistible power of the army and the navy might work great ills before it was overthrown. From this the islands were saved by the very rapidity with which the system broke up, owing to the internal discords which Cromwell alone had been able to hold in check.

The rapidity with which the government of the country swung back through all the changes of the last years showed how insecure were the foundations of Cromwell's government. He died on 3rd September 1658. He was at first quietly succeeded as Protector by his son Richard. But Richard was a civilian, and had no hold over the army. The army officers thought they could claim a practical independence; they demanded that Fleetwood, one of their number, should be made Commander-in-Chief and should control all appointments of officers, and, though this was not granted, it showed how dangerous the army was. The Parliament, which met in January 1659, recognised the new Protector, but a republican minority strenuously resisted, and betook itself to intrigues with the army chiefs. In April the generals demanded and obtained the dissolution of the

Parliament: in May they restored the Rump as it had been in 1652, without the Presbyterians excluded by Pride's Purge in 1648. The Rump at once declared the Protectorate abolished, and Richard Cromwell retired very willingly into private life, after a reign of eight months.

But the old quarrel between the Rump and the army once more broke out, especially on the question of army appointments, which the generals wished to keep in their own hands. At the same time, there were plans for widespread royalist risings. One of these, in Cheshire and Lancashire, was more or less serious, and the Earl of Derby for a moment seized Chester. But the army was strong enough to deal with these troubles; the quarrel with Parliament was more serious. In October the Rump was once more expelled by the army. No government could stand which did not submit to army dictation. The generals nominated a Committee of Safety to carry on administration, and a sub-committee set to work to make yet another new constitution.

But these frequent revolutions not only disgusted and alarmed the nation, they introduced discord into the army itself. The Governor of Portsmouth pronounced for the restoration of Parliament, and troops sent to deal with him went over to his side. The army in Ireland also declared for Parliament. The fleet in the Downs took the same side. Above all, George Monk, the shrewd and able commander of the army in Scotland, prepared for open war on behalf of legal government against mere force. General Lambert, the most active spirit among the generals, was sent north to deal with him, but only wasted time in negotiations; and meanwhile Lambert's friends in London, taking fright, had once more recalled the Rump, which promptly summoned Monk to London to protect it. The forces of the army were hopelessly split.

Meanwhile, throughout the country, there were wide demands for the next step to be taken in the undoing of the work of the last ten years. All the legislation of the Protectorate had been swept away: it remained to undo Pride's Purge, and bring back the excluded Presbyterians. London was almost in rebellion when Monk arrived at the beginning of February. A week after his arrival Monk declared for the restoration of the excluded members. Thus the Long Parliament of the civil war was restored. It assumed control at the end of February 1660; declared that everything done since Pride's Purge (including, of course, the execution of Charles I.) had been illegal; re-established the Presby-

terian system, and the Solemn League and Covenant, thus returning to 1643; decreed the election of a new Parliament; and dissolved in March, after an existence of nearly twenty years.

The new Parliament was elected on the old basis, and, of course, represented England only. It was later known as the Convention, because it had not been regularly summoned by the king. The majority of its members were Presbyterians, but it included also a large number of Anglicans. But both alike were definitely Royalist in politics. The remnants of the House of Lords, though unsummoned, met at the same time. Meanwhile Monk had opened private negotiations with Charles II., who issued from Breda a declaration promising his consent to an Act giving liberty to tender consciences, a general pardon, and the payment of arrears to the army. A royal messenger came with a letter from Charles to Parliament embodying these terms. He was received with deference, and on May 1st both houses resolved that, 'according to the ancient and fundamental laws of the kingdom,' the government is and ought to be by King, Lords, and Commons. On May 8th Charles II. was proclaimed king with all the ancient ceremonial. Thus, easily and suddenly, the Puritan republic collapsed. The long nightmare of rule by force, the long breach with the orderly and law-abiding methods of English government, were over and done with.

Solemn deputations to invite the king to return went over to Holland. On the 24th of May Charles II. landed at Dover. On the 29th he rode into London from Rochester, through twenty-five miles of exultant cheering multitudes, rejoicing as if for the coming of an angel of goodness. So crowded were the streets of London with happy citizens in their best clothes that it took seven hours for the procession to reach Whitehall, where, in the Banqueting Hall from which his father had stepped out to the scaffold, the Lords and Commons were assembled to greet the new king with humble and fervent welcomes. To the rule of this good-natured voluptuary, simply because he stood for the old ways and the old laws, there was an eager 'consent' such as Cromwell had never been able to attain at the moment of his highest success.

The Puritan Revolution was over. But though all the formal changes of law for which so much blood had been shed were undone, and though England had gone back, in form, to 1640, nothing could undo the influence which the

stern temper of the Puritans had wielded, and was still to wield, upon the fortunes of the British Commonwealth. The sects might henceforth be a persecuted remnant, but they remained, solidly organised bodies of opinion, as strong to endure as they had been unflinching in action. The idea of a nation all believing the same doctrines and worshipping in the same forms was henceforth patently unrealisable; always henceforward there were large bodies of men who formed a visible contradiction of this idea. As sectaries, standing invincibly for their own distinctive conceptions of life and truth, the Puritans were able to render far greater services to their country and to freedom than they could ever have done had they succeeded in their aim of imposing these conceptions upon the whole nation. Always they were there to protest against dominant orthodoxies, in politics as well as in religion.

Moreover something of their spirit, something of the best aspect of it, its ever-present sense of responsibility to God for the use of power, its readiness to test political action by higher standards than those of expediency, extended in the coming generations far beyond the limits of the sects, and became one of the preservative elements in the public life of England. If the continuing tradition of Puritanism has caused some narrowness in English life, and still more in Scottish life, it has beyond all question been a source of strength far more than of weakness.

And by way of reaction, also, the Puritan Revolution left indelible marks upon English life and institutions. It produced an unquenchable fear of the rule of force, which took for a long time an exaggerated form in the distrust of standing armies. It intensified the ancient habit of respect for law as such, and of unwillingness to resort to any but constitutional and legal means of changing even bad laws. It rooted the belief that even the noblest and the most enlightened aims are vitiated and will eventually be frustrated if those who advocate them try to secure their victory by force, and not by discussion and persuasion. These were to be henceforth the characteristic notes of the growth of free institutions in the British Commonwealth. Revolution by violence, even for the highest ends, had been condemned by experience. It was not only the reign of the Stewarts that was restored in 1660, it was the Reign of Law,

BOOK V

CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT AND IMPERIAL DEVELOPMENT

(A.D. 1660-1714)

INTRODUCTION

THE second half of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth form a period of the utmost moment in the development of the British Commonwealth and of its distinctive institutions.

In the first place it was during this period that the system of government by the control of Parliament over the executive was definitely established, and that the means by which the control of Parliament could be exercised—the cabinet system and the party system—began to be wrought out. The struggle for a system of national self-government in the first half of the century had brought about civil war, and had ended in a *cul de sac*: no solution was to be found along the lines pursued by the Puritan republic, and the result was that the islands returned, at the Restoration, to the old system of monarchical control of the executive government. In Scotland, and to a less degree in Ireland, the Restoration practically brought about the establishment of absolute monarchy. But in England the traditional powers of Parliament made this impossible; even in the ardour of loyalism which followed his return, Charles II. found it impossible to exercise the powers which his father had wielded, and still less to reign as an unchecked despot, like his cousin Louis XIV. During his reign two things of great importance happened: the ministers of state began to act together as a Cabinet, and Parliament began to be divided into two more or less clearly defined parties, with the consequence that to some extent the king found it necessary to choose his ministers in such a way as to command the support of Parliament. At the end of the reign he obtained for a time the upper hand, and freed himself from parliamentary restraints; and during the short reign of James II. there seemed to be a real danger of the establishment of absolutism in England. This danger was removed by the Revolution of 1688, which finally and unmistakably established the supremacy of Parliament; and during the reigns of William III. and Anne the unceasing conflicts of the two political parties compelled the gradual adoption of

a system whereby the ministers of State were increasingly drawn from the party possessing a parliamentary majority. The great achievement of the age was the development, for the first time in history, of the machinery which made self-government on a national scale practicable.

In the second place, this period saw a clearer definition of the relations between the various nations of the islands. Scotland, awakened by the Revolution to an active political life, and tending to pursue under her own Parliament a dangerously independent policy, was united with England on very generous terms, which opened for her, as a full partner in the British Commonwealth, an era of growing prosperity. On the other hand, Ireland, always the Cinderella of the island family, was brought by the events of the Revolution into a worse instead of a better position. The antipathy between the Catholic and the Protestant elements in her population was intensified. The majority of the population were deprived of all political rights, and subjected to a pitiless penal code. The country as a whole was treated as a subject dominion, and deprived of the right of freely developing its own resources by severe trade restrictions imposed by the British Parliament. And the suggestion of a political union, which might at this stage have helped to remove old sores in Ireland as in Scotland, was not even considered. The treatment of Ireland after the Revolution is the darkest stain on the history of the whole Commonwealth.

In the third place this period saw the first systematic attempt to define an imperial policy, and it also saw great activity in the creation and organisation of new colonies, especially during the reign of Charles II. The new imperial policy was marked by two outstanding features. The first was that all the colonies were endowed with the full machinery for local self-government, with institutions modelled on those of the homeland, and with complete religious toleration. In these respects the British imperial system was far ahead of any other in the world. To the mother country was reserved the control of foreign policy and of trade relations. The second feature of the system was that an attempt was made to organise the empire as an economic unit, in which the mother country was to be the central market and distributing centre. The danger of this was that it tended to subordinate the economic interests of the colonies to those of the mother country, and thus to engender strife between them: this tendency was increased

in an unfortunate degree after the Revolution, owing to the greater influence which the British trading classes then obtained in government.

In the fourth place the period was marked by two Dutch wars, arising largely out of the old commercial rivalries of the two maritime powers, and—far more important—by a desperate struggle against France, which is almost as important in the history of the Commonwealth as the struggle with Spain a century earlier. Long postponed by the fact that Charles II. and James II. consented to be pensioners of France, this conflict broke out with the Revolution, and filled the remainder of the period. It was a many-sided struggle, and had momentous results. It was a struggle to prevent the domination of Europe by a single overweening power, and in this aspect the islands found themselves at first the partners and then the leaders of a united Europe. It was a struggle also for commercial, naval, and colonial supremacy, though this aspect of the conflict was not predominant in the minds of contemporaries, and therefore the struggle was renewed and fought to a finish in the next era. Perhaps the main outcome of the conflict from the point of view of the Commonwealth as a whole was that it definitely established British naval supremacy—the foundation upon which the splendid achievements of the next age were to rest.

But the core and centre of the story of these years is to be found in the half-blind striving after national self-government which distinguishes it. Carried on as it was in a series of often sordid conflicts of parties, its full significance is apt to be lost unless the reader keeps always in mind the fact that the parties and politicians of the period were the unworthy instruments of a great historical development of momentous importance not only to the British Commonwealth but to the whole world.

CHAPTER I

THE RESTORATION

§ 1. *The Ideas of the Restoration and the Character of Charles II.*

THE theory of the Restoration was that there was to be a return to the old system which had existed before the civil war. This was impossible in practice, for what had been done during the previous eighteen years in all the British realms could not be simply wiped out. During all that time men had been engaged in discussing the problems of government in State and Church; they had been making the most varied experiments, and it was impossible to restore the old habit of submitting to and taking for granted traditional authorities. In any case the old system had to be re-defined; and even among those who were most anxious to restore it there was room for difference as to what it really had been. Moreover social and political changes had taken place which were bound to have a great effect. The steady growth of English trade had made the trading class wealthier and more important than it had ever been. The relations between the islands and the continent had become closer than ever before, partly by reason of the growth of trade, partly because of Cromwell's active foreign policy, and partly because so many royalists had lived for years in exile on the continent. Foreign affairs were to have in the future a far deeper influence on British politics than they had had in the past, and since it was becoming plain that everybody's interests were affected by them, it was impossible that they should any longer be regarded as the peculiar concern of the king and his little group of advisers alone. The colonies had become factors of importance in the life of many Englishmen, and it was inevitable that their ideas and their ways of life should exercise some influence in England, though not yet in the other parts of the islands. Above all, during the long discussions of the last years, rival theories of politics and of Church government had been developed with a sharpness never known before; their

adherents were tending to group themselves into more or less organised parties, and the emergence of organised parties, which is one of the main features of the next generation, was bound to affect the whole system. A mere restoration of the old ways was therefore impossible : ' a restoration is always a revolution,' as a great historian has said.

The statesmen of the restored régime had in their hands, if they had liked to use it, the possibility of working out an intelligent system of relations for all the British lands. But the theory of mere restoration and the antipathies which had been aroused by the forced union under Cromwell forbade that ; the problems of settlement were quite separately dealt with in England, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in the colonies. The only common link was provided by the king and by his character and aims.

Charles II., who had the chance of making a fresh start for the monarchy of the British realms, was in every way unfitted for so great a task. He was a witty, good-humoured, easy-going young libertine of thirty, who had no principles, no beliefs, and no sense of honour. He had known long exile and penury, and he now intended to have a pleasant life and to avoid all risk of ' going on his travels again.' The flagrant and shameless immorality of his life and of those whom he chose as his friends shocked even a generation which was ready to throw off the restraints that the Puritans had imposed. Puritan ideals of life still influenced very large elements of the population both in England and in Scotland ; and while Charles was personally popular and therefore able to exercise a very vicious influence in English life, his behaviour and the character of his court certainly helped to undermine the monarchy in both countries. Charles' best feature was a certain kindliness, which made him dislike unnecessary persecution and encouraged him to favour a policy which in any case seemed to suit his private aims.

In politics he had little of the lofty belief in royal authority as a divinely imposed responsibility which had possessed and ruined his father. He had too keen a sense of humour to take himself seriously as the Lord's anointed, nor was he prepared to run risks for such a cause. But he envied the unrestrained power and the command over all the resources of the State which were enjoyed by his brilliant cousin, Louis XIV. of France ; and, though he was not ready to fight for it openly, he was willing to sacrifice his own honour and his country's if, at so cheap a rate, and in an underhand way, he could gain freedom from the parliamentary control which

he found so irksome. Religion meant little or nothing to him, but he was inclined to think that Roman Catholicism was the most convenient religion for a prince; and, if he could, he would have made all the islands Roman Catholic. He was too lazy and pleasure-loving to worry about the details of government, and so left the actual work to ministers, who became relatively more important in this period than they had been. But he was shrewd, clever, and unhampered by scruples; he rather enjoyed playing the game of political intrigue and outwitting opponents, at which he could be very skilful. And in this way he was far more formidable than his father, for he never lost his temper, he understood the baser part of men, and he had an easy and winning charm of manner which gave him a great advantage in dealing with men. He profited by contrast with his brother and destined successor, James Duke of York, whom everybody disliked because he was a narrow-minded and unforgiving egoist and a born tyrant, capable of both cruelty and treachery. Yet James, unlike Charles, had beliefs for which he was prepared to take risks and to suffer, and was not lacking in patriotism.

One of the reasons why Scotland and Ireland were separately dealt with was that in those countries it seemed more possible to establish a royal absolutism than in England. For in spite of the enthusiasm with which he was welcomed back and the prevalence of talk about the divine right of kings and the duty of passive obedience, Charles was shrewd enough to know that the English Parliament would not be easy to deal with. The whole history of his reign justified this view. It was a period of steady growth in parliamentary power, and the attempt to overthrow this power, which was made during Charles' last years and under his successor, and which for a time seemed to be successful, only ended in the Revolution which finally bitted and bridled the English monarchy, and established the supremacy of Parliament not only in England but throughout the islands.

§ 2. *England: Limited Monarchy and Religious Intolerance.*

The Declaration of Breda, issued before his return to England, had pledged Charles II. to support a policy of religious toleration and political reconciliation, but had left the chief points at issue to be decided by a free Parliament. The first earnest that the king intended to follow this course was his inclusion in the Privy Council not only of a large

number of royalists, but of many who had taken the parliamentary side in the civil war or even served under Cromwell, like Monk (now made Duke of Albemarle) or Anthony Ashley Cooper (later Lord Ashley and Earl of Shaftesbury). The result was that the Privy Council became too big and too heterogeneous to be the active working centre of government, as it had been under the Tudors and early Stewarts. The actual conduct of affairs largely passed to Committees of the Council, nominated by the king, which generally worked with great industry and intelligence. But there also came into being a small informal group of leading men, who discussed with the king broad questions of policy, and co-ordinated the work of the Committees. This group included the principal ministers, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer and the two Secretaries of State, with such others as the king might choose. The rise of this informal and rather indefinite body was something of a new departure in government; in a sense it may be described as the beginning of the Cabinet system. During the first years of the reign this rudimentary Cabinet was dominated by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Clarendon, who had been a member of the Long Parliament and later Charles I.'s chief minister during the war, and Charles II.'s during the exile. Clarendon was a high churchman in religion; in politics he adhered to the work of the first session of the Long Parliament, in which he had taken part. The Restoration settlement was in fact mainly Clarendon's work; but as he had to carry Parliament with him, it is not fair to blame him for all the excesses of Parliament.

At first he had to deal with the Convention which had brought about the king's return, and in which there was a Presbyterian majority. An Act of indemnity and oblivion was passed, so generous in its terms that angry cavaliers said it gave indemnity to the king's enemies and oblivion to his friends. Only fourteen persons were put to death in England, largely from among the 'regicides' who had condemned Charles I. Clarendon deserves the credit of having resisted an attempt in the House of Lords to demand greater severity. The difficult question of rights to land which had been alienated by royalists during the troubles was settled by confirming existing arrangements, except in the case of Crown or Church lands, or lands which had been confiscated by the usurping government. This also was a grievance to discontented cavaliers, and made them less ready to be

subservient to the king and the minister, who had in their view 'betrayed' them. The Convention also carried out an old plan of James I. by abolishing feudal tenures and granting to the Crown in their place a permanent revenue from the excise duties, first imposed during the civil war. This meant that the land-owning aristocracy escaped the last relics of its old feudal obligations, at the expense of the nation.

But the main immediate problem was that of religious conciliation. The Convention could not settle this; it had to be left to a properly elected Parliament. But a conference held at Clarendon's house between leading Anglicans and Presbyterians held out hopes of a settlement on moderate Episcopal lines which would have reconciled the great majority of the Presbyterians. The discussions were resumed in what is known as the Savoy Conference, presided over by the Bishop of London. But before any definite conclusion had been reached the new Parliament had been elected (May 1661), and it took the matter into its own hands.

Elected in the first enthusiasm of the Restoration, this Parliament, which was to last for eighteen years—nearly as long as the Long Parliament—contained an overwhelming majority of staunch royalists or cavaliers, determined to exact vengeance for all their sufferings; and they soon swept away all hope of compromise. They at once repealed the Act of 1642 which had excluded the bishops from the House of Lords. Then, because the Puritans were strongest in the towns, they passed a *Corporation Act* (1661), imposing upon all members of municipal corporations a declaration against resistance to the Crown and a formal repudiation of the Solemn League and Covenant. Next they passed an *Act of Uniformity* (1662) making the Prayer-book compulsory, and requiring the acceptance of episcopal ordination and of all the doctrines and ceremonies of the Prayer-book from all incumbents of livings and all teachers in universities, schools, or even private houses, before St. Bartholomew's Day. To this was added a *Licensing Act* (1662), aimed at the printing and sale of 'heretical, schismatical, and seditious' books and pamphlets, and re-establishing the censorship of the press: the judges were to approve all legal writings, the secretaries of state all historical and political writings, the bishops all religious, philosophical and scientific writings. The Act was only for two years, but it was regularly renewed until 1679. Later, alarmed by signs of a desire for toleration on the part of the king, Parliament not only threw out an attempted Toleration Bill (1663), but went on to pass two

ferocious Acts against the Puritans: a *Conventicle Act* (1664), which prohibited under severe penalties attendance at any meeting of more than four persons assembled for worship other than that of the Church of England; and what is known as the *Five Mile Act* (1665), which prohibited under severe penalties any of the displaced Puritan ministers from coming within five miles of a corporate town or a parish in which they had previously taught or preached, unless they swore to the Act of Uniformity, took an oath against resistance under any pretext, and swore not to endeavour any change whatsoever in Church or State. The occasion of this infamous measure was that the plague was raging in London, and many Puritan ministers had returned to help their flocks: Parliament, safe at Oxford, was alarmed at the prospect that the ministers might regain their old ascendency.

In theory these measures ought to have crushed the Puritan sects out of existence. More than 1200 clergy left their homes and their churches on St. Bartholomew's Day 1662 rather than take the oaths of uniformity, and these included some of the noblest of the Puritan divines, like Richard Baxter, Edmund Calamy, William Bates, and the two grandfathers of John Wesley. They went into penury; their followers could not help them. But their example at once ennobled and maintained the Puritan tradition. Some of the noblest expressions of the Puritan spirit belong to these years. Milton, blind, poor and obscure, wrote in these years the great epic of Puritanism, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*; John Bunyan, the tinker-preacher, imprisoned under the Conventicle Act, reflected the loftiest and the tenderest aspects of Puritanism in *The Pilgrim's Progress*; and these two not only helped to keep the spirit of the Puritans alive as a powerful factor in the life and thought of England, they stood supreme among the writers of their age. The bulk of the ordinary Puritans quietly conformed, as their fathers had done under Laud, but remained still Puritan in sympathy; and this defeated the aims of the Corporation Act, for it meant that the towns still remained Puritan. There was a substantial minority of Puritan sympathisers even in the Cavalier Parliament. How many Puritans refused to conform throughout the country we have no means of knowing. Algernon Sidney, twenty years later, estimated them at one million, which must be a great exaggeration, seeing that the total population of the country was only about five millions. But the Non-

conformists were certainly numerous, and were henceforward a factor in the life of the nation that could not be disregarded.

While the Cavalier Parliament was unbending in its hostility to the Puritans and in its aversion from the idea of religious freedom, it was by no means inclined to increase the power of the Crown in the political sphere. It did not dream of restoring the 'prerogatives' which the Tudors and the early Stewarts had exercised: the constitution of 1640-1 was what it accepted and re-defined. The abolition of the old prerogative courts, Star Chamber, High Commission Court and the rest, was confirmed in 1661: the ordinary process of law must suffice for the maintenance of governmental authority. The Triennial Act of 1641 was repealed, it is true, but only because its terms were offensive: its main provision, that Parliament must meet at least every three years, was re-enacted in the Triennial Act of 1664. By the Militia Acts (1661-1663) Parliament restored to the Crown supreme control over the forces by land and sea, but this had only been withdrawn by the Long Parliament on the eve of war, and the Militia Acts implied that the old-fashioned militia under the lords-lieutenant of the counties ought to be sufficient for defence. The idea of a standing professional army was as abhorrent to the royalists as to anybody else; it was abhorrent precisely because it was regarded as a danger to political liberty.

There was, indeed, little fear that Charles II. would be able to shake himself free from dependence on the English Parliament. For, in spite of the large revenue granted to him for life, he was in debt, and was never able to escape from it. He had brought with him from exile £3,000,000 of debt; he found the finances of the country dislocated by the anarchy of the last two years, and his own gross extravagance added to his troubles. Though the abounding prosperity of the country increased the revenue from customs duties by leaps and bounds, he could never make both ends meet without assistance. The control of Parliament over taxation was now so complete that he could not venture upon any of the irregular devices employed by his father. If he did not accept his dependence upon Parliament, the only alternative was to become a pensionary of some foreign power, and when he resorted to this device he raised fresh trouble with Parliament. Assuredly the restoration did not mean anything like the establishment of absolute monarchy in England.

§ 3. *Scotland: Absolutism and Religious Persecution.*

In Scotland it was very different. Here Charles might hope to establish, and did very nearly establish, absolute power: only the dour resistance of the more extreme Presbyterians checked him. His main agent in the subjugation of Scotland was the Earl (later Duke) of Lauderdale, who as Secretary for Scotland spent most of his time at the court in London, and ruled Scotland through agents: Lauderdale retained his position through all the changes of court factions for nearly twenty years. He had been a Presbyterian, and had played a prominent part in the Scottish troubles: he had persuaded Charles II. to accept the Covenant in 1650; now he was ready to lend himself to be the agent of the destruction of the system, to which the king had then sworn. But on the whole his policy was one of moderate toleration for the Presbyterians, at any rate during the first part of his tenure of power, combined with a re-establishment of the Episcopal system of Church government, and the enforcement of an efficient control by the Crown in all matters of State.

Even fewer victims marked the beginning of the new régime in Scotland than in England. Four men only suffered death. One of these was the Earl of Argyll; another James Guthrie, the most fanatical of the extreme school of Presbyterians. In 1661 a Scottish Parliament met: 'never,' said one of its members, 'was Parliament so obsequious.' The main reason was that the nobles were sick of the tyranny of the ministers, which they had endured since 1638, and that the old alliance between them and the Crown, which Charles I. had broken, was restored. A large revenue was voted to the king, which enabled him to maintain an army such as none of his predecessors had possessed.

As in the days of James I., the Lords of the Articles (who drafted all the business of Parliament) were practically nominated by Lauderdale on behalf of the Crown. All the Acts of all the parliaments since 1633, including that of 1641 at which Charles I. had been present, were rescinded. This meant that at one blow the whole of the results of the Scottish revolution since 1638 were undone, and Charles II. became as absolute as James I. had been. All political power was once more wielded by a small Privy Council, whose members were all nominated by Lauderdale.

In the sphere of religion the submissive Scottish Parlia-

ment passed an Act declaring that 'the disposal of the external government of the Church doth properly belong to His Majesty as an inherent right of the Crown': a declaration hateful to sound Presbyterians, who claimed for the Church complete freedom from State control. The covenants were declared unlawful, and a repudiation of them and of all resistance to the Crown was imposed upon all office-holders. But Lauderdale was too shrewd a man to press these immense claims unduly far, though some of the royalists were ready to go to any extreme. Though the bishops were restored, they were not given great powers, and if the General Assembly was never summoned lest it should try to organise national resistance, the kirk sessions, presbyteries and diocesan synods continued their work. Nor was any attempt made to impose the Anglican liturgy upon the recalcitrant Scots.

On the whole this compromise was accepted in the greater part of the country. But in the south-west—Lanark, Ayrshire and Galloway—there was a different temper. In this district, which had always been the stronghold of the extremists, 300 ministers declined to forswear the Covenants or to recognise Episcopacy. They were extruded from their parishes, but their parishioners followed them, despite all prohibitions of 'conventicles'; and the ministrations of the 'curates' who replaced them were deserted. This was the beginning of the Covenanters, the dour Westland Whigs, whom none could tame. Soldiers were sent to deal with them: absentees from church were fined, and had soldiers billeted upon them. This persecution went on steadily until in 1666 it led to a rising. But rebellion was hopeless in face of the forces which the Crown controlled. The Pentland Rising (so called because it was defeated in the Pentland Hills, though it began in Galloway) failed to raise the country, and was crushed at Rullion Green. Forty men were killed in the fight; as many more, taken prisoners, were hanged for refusing to renounce the Covenants; ministers and other leaders were tortured with the boot and the thumbscrew to make them betray accomplices; more troops than ever, under the cruel Dalziel of Binns, were sent into Galloway. But only a moderate degree of success followed this ferocity.

The persecution which had gone on from 1663 to 1667 was in the main due to the members of the Privy Council in Scotland. Lauderdale determined to try the effects of greater moderation. The troops were recalled, and in 1669

an 'indulgence' was issued whereby extruded ministers were allowed to return to their parishes, if they had behaved themselves peacefully, without taking the oaths. Some forty of them accepted these terms. But this only increased the courage and bitterness of those who refused to sacrifice their principles 'for a mess of pottage': the population of the south-west, relieved of the presence of the soldiers, resorted once more to the conventicles.

Thereupon Lauderdale fell back upon severity. In 1670 he passed through Parliament a ferocious Act against conventicles, far more severe than the corresponding English Act. Preachers and those who listened to them were liable to fines and imprisonment: preachers out of doors were to be put to death. But even this Act—too severe to be literally enforced—did not work a cure. The south-west was irreconcilable, and before long seething discontent was to break into open revolt.

The full enforcement of this ferocious measure against conventicles was postponed until 1674. Troops were again sent into the disaffected districts. All landholders were required to give bonds for themselves and all their tenants and dependents that they would neither go to conventicles nor help any preacher or frequenter of them. When they protested that they could not assume such responsibility, 10,000 men, including 6000 Highlanders, were sent into the West and empowered to quarter themselves without payment on any house not specially exempted. After a few months, the Highlanders went home laden with plunder.

Such measures could have only one end—revolt. In 1679 some desperate men murdered Archbishop Sharp, once a Presbyterian minister, now Lauderdale's right hand, at Magus Muir, near St. Andrews. The murderers fled for refuge to the west country, which rose in arms to support them. A large conventicle, worshipping with enthusiasm among the moors at Drumclog, was attacked by troopers under the notorious persecutor, John Graham of Claverhouse, and drove them off with loss. This raised the West; an army of 1500 men, under the Duke of Monmouth, had to be sent to deal with the rebels. At Bothwell Bridge the regular forces won an easy victory, killed 400 men, and took 1200 prisoners. Then began the ugly period known in the annals of Scotland as 'the killing time,' when the unhappy Covenanters were hunted down like wild animals among the southern moorlands, without mercy or pity; shot like dogs at their own thresholds; tortured with boot and thumb-

screw. The chief ruler of Scotland during these years was James, Duke of York. When in 1685 he succeeded to the throne, the 'killing time' still went on. It only stopped with the Revolution, and it left an indelible mark in Scottish history.

This is what the Restoration brought to Scotland: political absolutism; an army ready to be used if need be elsewhere; and, for the more rigid Presbyterians of the south-west, a fierce persecution such as no part of Britain had ever endured before in all its history. Only one part of the country suffered directly from this persecution; but the rest looked on with bitter sympathy.

Meanwhile, throughout this period, Scotland was having brought home to her some of the disadvantages of being treated as a separate country by her powerful neighbour. England (as we shall see later) was now entering upon a policy of high protection for the development of her trade, and Scotland found herself treated as a foreign country, excluded both from English and from colonial markets. At the same time, she could have no independent foreign policy: her policy was controlled by the English government of her king. Denied freedom for her Church, subject to a practical absolutism in political affairs, she was in her poverty suffering all the defects of separation from a thriving and prosperous neighbour, while she enjoyed none of the advantages of independence.

§ 4. *Ireland: Absolutism and partial Reconciliation.*

In Ireland the statesmen of the Restoration were faced by a problem in itself more difficult than that presented by Scotland; for the evils and injustices which had been perpetrated during the Irish rebellion and the rule of the Puritans were far more difficult to cure. Yet it may fairly be said that the results in Ireland were more satisfactory than anywhere else, and this for two reasons. In the first place the dominant influence in the settlement was that of the Duke of Ormond, himself an Irishman who had a good deal of sympathy for the Irish Catholics, but who was at the same time resolute to maintain the English ascendency. In the second place Charles II. and his royalist advisers felt some tenderness for the Catholics; but at the same time they dared not wholly alienate the recent English settlers. Hence the new régime in Ireland was less brutal and less

one-sided than it showed itself in Scotland, and there was even a beginning of prosperity and contentment. It was a sign of real advance when the Lord-Lieutenant received an address from a number of Catholic clergy and gentry protesting their loyalty to the Crown, and disclaiming all foreign power, 'papal or princely, spiritual or temporal.' This Loyal Remonstrance did not indeed represent the general opinion of Irish Catholics, but it marked what might have been the beginning of an era of reconciliation.

The main difficulty was the problem of dealing with the lands which, under the Puritan Republic, had been forcibly taken from Catholic proprietors and transferred to English settlers. The grants could not be wholly resumed, but an attempt was made to do justice at least to those of the Irish Catholics who could prove that they had not actively waged war against the Crown, and the Protestant owners were compelled to disgorge part of their spoils. The discussion of this difficult problem took five years. It was provisionally determined by an Act of Settlement (1662), which was amended in 1665. It did only rough justice. Its result was that, of the total area of the 'plantations' (excluding Connaught), about one-third was restored to dispossessed Irish proprietors, about one-third went to the earlier English planters from the time of Elizabeth onwards, and about one-third was kept by settlers of the Cromwellian period. This cannot be called a just apportionment, but it was better than the gross spoliation of Cromwell. Yet there were many who were left impoverished and without redress, and large numbers of these took to the wilds and became mere robbers and Ishmaels. They were known as Tories.

Ireland, like Scotland, suffered by being treated as a foreign country under the new English protective policy. She found all her live stock—her chief produce—excluded from importation to England by an Act of 1666. But for all that she enjoyed during this period a real and growing prosperity. Instead of cattle, she sold to England beef and butter, tallow and hides. She also bred sheep on a very great scale, and for a time exported large quantities of wool to the English market. When this export in its turn was stopped, she began to develop a considerable woollen manufacture of her own, while her linen industry also throve. She was excluded by the protective system from colonial markets, but she opened up a prosperous trade with the continent. And in general she enjoyed an unexampled prosperity during the twenty years following the Restoration.

This prosperity helped to reduce the bitterness of racial and religious feeling, though this bitterness had by no means yet died out, and the fact that Ormond in general followed a policy of tolerance, avoided harrying the Catholics, and sensibly made no attempt to enforce the exclusion of Catholics from corporate towns which had been part of the Puritan policy, contributed still more to the rise of better feeling. One result was that the Irish Parliament, on the rare occasions of its meeting, gave little trouble, voted the king a substantial revenue, and thus provided him with the means for maintaining an army.

The influence of the Restoration upon the colonies was even more important than its influence upon Scotland and Ireland; for here the new régime brought about the initiation of an imperial policy of a new type which is so important in its bearings upon the future development of the British Commonwealth that it must be specially and separately dealt with.

Yet to the colonies themselves, and to England also, the aims and character of Restoration policy in Scotland and in Ireland, where the king had a free hand, were of the utmost importance. In Scotland absolutism, holding the country firmly in hand, bitterly persecuting the more extreme Presbyterians—and maintaining a considerable army: in Ireland also a practical absolutism, showing an unwonted forbearance to the hard-used Catholics, drawing a substantial revenue from the growing prosperity of the country—and maintaining a considerable army: these were factors which might have had, and very nearly did have, a momentous bearing upon the final conflict between Crown and Parliament which events were bringing gradually nearer in England.

We have carried the analysis of the Restoration settlement in the two lesser countries considerably beyond the date to which we have carried it in England, because it is necessary to keep in mind what was happening in these countries while the great struggle was fought out in England. And it is equally necessary to keep in mind the course of events in Europe, and the development of English trading and colonial policy, because these also had a more intimate bearing upon the development of the constitutional struggle than ever they had had before. Not the islands alone, but the British Commonwealth as a whole, and the whole world

of Western civilisation, were in fact involved in the coming controversy; and their fortunes were to be deeply affected by its course and by its issue.

[R. Lodge, *England from the Restoration to the Death of William III.* is the best modern summary of the period; Ranke's *History of England principally in the Seventeenth Century*; Hallam's *Constitutional History*; Robertson's *Statutes and Documents*; Airy's *Charles II.* Clarendon's *Autobiography* is a first-hand authority for the period covered by this chapter; so is Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, which is valuable for Scotland; for which see also Hume Brown's or Lang's *History of Scotland.* Airy's *The Restoration* (Epochs of Modern History) is a useful short book, both for England and for Europe.]

CHAPTER II

EUROPE IN THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV.

(A.D. 1661-1688)

§ 1. *The Age of Enlightenment.*

THE middle of the seventeenth century was the beginning of a new era in the history of Western civilisation as a whole, as well as in the history of the islands. The wars of religion, which had lasted nearly a century, were over. Henceforth, though religious conflicts within States were still bitter, the relations between States were no longer to be governed by religious differences. In the political sphere the outstanding feature of the new age was the triumph of absolute monarchy everywhere save in the British realms, the United Provinces and Switzerland: absolute monarchy alone seemed to ensure the efficiency, and the vigour and consistency of policy, which made for national strength and greatness. It was in France under Louis XIV. that absolute monarchy appeared to have won its most brilliant successes. The pre-eminence which France enjoyed in this period, in the arts and in manners as well as in politics, was greater than any State had hitherto enjoyed; and it seemed to be due, in no small degree, to the intelligent autocracy which controlled and developed all the resources of the nation.

Another marked feature of the age was that all the more progressive States now paid greater attention than ever before to the systematic development of industry and commerce as the main sources of national wealth. Men began to discuss the principles of the science of wealth-making, and the causes of national prosperity: the rudiments of political economy began to be defined. Because of the immense importance now attached to foreign trade, the greater States became more eager than ever to get control of oversea possessions, and to organise these possessions in such a way as to produce the maximum benefit for the mother country; and out of this came the beginnings of a keen competition for colonial empire, far

more systematic than in the previous age; with this we shall have to deal in the next chapter.

But to us, looking back from the vantage-ground of the present, these features of the period, important as they were, must seem less significant than another characteristic of the age to which contemporaries attached relatively little weight. It is not an exaggeration to say that this age saw the birth of organised science; and when we consider how scientific investigation was to give to man a command over the forces of nature such as he had never possessed, how it was to transform the material conditions of human life, and how profoundly it was to affect all men's thinking about themselves and the world, and all their religious and political ideas, the birth of organised science must appear to be the supreme achievement of the age. In the epoch-making series of discoveries which distinguished the period Englishmen took their share, and more than their share; it may fairly be claimed that England—the land where freedom of thought was more fully established than anywhere else—took the lead in the scientific movement which was the greatest glory of this age.

Great progress had, indeed, already been made in many fields of science during the first half of the century. The great Englishman Bacon and the great Frenchman Descartes had wrought out the principles of a new philosophy and of a new scientific method of observation and experiment. The great Italian Galileo had laid the foundations of modern physical science, and had revolutionised men's views as to the place of the Earth among the heavenly bodies. The great Englishman Harvey, by demonstrating the circulation of the blood, had begun modern physiology. And many lesser workers in all spheres, more especially in mathematics and astronomy, but also in physics, in botany and in zoology, had helped to make a break with the unscientific methods and traditions of the Middle Ages. But it was in the second half of the century, when the intensity of religious passions had abated, and when theological problems no longer dominated the ablest minds, that the new spirit and methods of inquiry began to reap their harvest, and that the co-operation of a multitude of patient workers in all countries began to build up the temple of science. For scientific investigation depends upon the co-operation of all who are engaged in it, and upon the free and constant discussion of their results. It knows no frontiers and no nationalities. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the new age was that

it made this co-operation possible by giving to the men of science centres for discussion and the comparison of results, and by affording them public recognition and support. In England the Royal Society was founded in 1662; in France the Academy of Sciences dates from 1666; and parallel bodies in other countries were soon to follow. The supreme name of this period in scientific investigation is that of the Englishman, Isaac Newton, whose work was as great a glory to the British people, and as great a contribution on their behalf to the common stock of the world's civilisation, as, in another field, the work of Shakespeare had earlier been. Newton's *Principia*, published in 1687, laid the sure foundations of modern science over an extraordinarily wide range. With Newton may be named the great German Leibniz; and there was a whole army of lesser investigators, most numerous in England and in France, but spread over all the countries of the West.

It would be beyond our province to analyse the significance of the new knowledge made available for man by the eager workers of this period. But one main outcome of their work ought to be noted. They displayed the universe as governed by fixed and unchanging laws, capable of being discovered and applied by patient and reverent observation and experiment; all their work was based upon this assumption, and was meaningless apart from it. And when this idea was once implanted in men's minds, the effect upon every field of thought could not but be very great. Already this spirit of patient search for the laws which govern the life of the world was showing itself in the beginnings of inquiry into the principles of political economy, and in the attempt to find a scientific basis for political theories. Even in precedent-loving England the mere fact that such and such a course had been followed by our ancestors was no longer felt to be a sufficient argument, and, in place of the more purely historical and legal arguments which had satisfied the last generation, closely reasoned political theories like those of Hobbes and Locke, to which we shall have to refer elsewhere, began to influence opinion. Political speculation was more active in England than in other countries, because political problems were more urgent there than elsewhere. But in a greater or less degree the same characteristics are to be found among the intellectual leaders in all countries. The Age of Reason was dawning, in succession to the Age of Dogma.

But these new forces as yet affected only a few. The

fortunes of the world were in the future to be deeply influenced by the patient work of the men of science; but in the meanwhile the determining factors were still the ambitions of powerful princes and the pride of rival nations.

§ 2. *The Ascendency of France.*

In the political history of Europe during this period three distinct threads of interest can be traced. One was the rivalry of the northern powers, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and the little German State of Brandenburg; its most striking results were to be the decline of Sweden after her brief period of greatness, and the rapid rise of Brandenburg, soon to become the kingdom of Prussia, to a position of influence. A second thread is provided by the threatening growth of the power of the Turks, and its later collapse, giving rise to what came to be known as the Eastern question. With these two groups of problems the island peoples were not at the moment very directly concerned; but since their later development was to be of very great importance in British history, we shall have to consider them briefly.

But it was the third thread of interest which immediately affected the fortunes of all the British realms. This was the dazzling strength and greatness of France under Louis XIV., which for a time threatened to lead to a French dominance over the whole of European affairs, and which was in the end to draw the islands into a conflict only less important to themselves than the conflict with Spain in the sixteenth century. Not only for the islanders, but for all Europe, the formidable power and the aggressive policy of France constituted the supreme political fact of the age.

France had suffered, during the second half of the sixteenth century, from the long agony of the religious wars. Her revival in the first half of the seventeenth century had been interrupted by civil strife, due to the last struggles of the nobles, and of other elements in the nation, to resist the growing power of the Crown. In spite of that, France had played a great part, and acquired large accessions of territory and prestige, in the Thirty Years' War, and in the war with Spain which grew out of it. Now that her internal troubles were over, the nation welcomed the establishment of a strong government able to prevent them from breaking out again. When King Louis XIV.,[1] after a long minority, himself under-

[1] There is a life of Louis XIV., by A. Hassall, in the Heroes of the Nations Series.

took the conduct of government in 1661, there was no power in the nation capable or desirous of resisting the royal authority. Louis had no Parliament to deal with, like his English cousin: the States General, the nearest French parallel, had long since ceased to meet, and were not to be summoned again until 1789. The king was above the law; he was the sole maker of law. He levied taxes at his will. All the officers of State in all parts of the country were his salaried nominees. The nobles had become a nobility of the court, seeking for royal favours. A fine army of veterans, the best in Europe, led by famous generals, supported the king's authority. But it scarcely needed such support, since the whole nation accepted it with fervent loyalty.

Already in 1661 (and this was to become more marked as time went on) the court of Versailles displayed a splendour such as the modern world had never seen. It set the fashion in manners and in dress for all Europe, and every petty prince strove to imitate it. This in itself gave to the *Grand Monarque* a prestige which had great political value. France set the fashion also in letters and the arts: the ascendency of French critics and poets and playwrights was greater than those of any nation have ever enjoyed before or since; and French became the language of culture, as well as of diplomacy and of polite society. And, through academies maintained under royal patronage, letters and the arts also were harnessed to the glittering chariot of the monarchy. Under an able foreign minister the French diplomatic service had been so skilfully organised that in every capital the French representative—helped by his country's prestige—was a political factor of the highest importance. Above all, under a very able and very industrious finance minister, Colbert, the resources of France were developed to the highest point that any country had yet reached. Agriculture was in every possible way encouraged and assisted. The manufacturing industries were reorganised under government direction. Magnificent roads, the finest in Europe or the world, were constructed, as well as canals such as no other State possessed. The mercantile marine of France was developed until it was able to compete with those of England and Holland. And, realising the importance of sea-power, Colbert built up a navy so powerful that in 1690, as we shall see, it was able to defeat the combined fleets of England and Holland. Finally France entered with zeal into the field of oversea colonisation and trade: we shall see more of this in the next chapter. All

this vigorous and successful work of organisation was going on during the first twenty years of the reign. Its result was to make France, beyond all competition or rivalry, the greatest and most splendid State in the world, and to win for her people a remarkable increase of prosperity. Well might it appear that absolute monarchy, well served, formed the best means of securing national welfare.

Louis XIV. seemed to have a choice, at the opening of this brilliant period, between two alternative courses—two ways of using the power and wealth of the country whose fortunes lay absolutely in his hands: it was almost the same alternative that lay before Germany nearly two centuries later. On the one hand, content with the unquestioned ascendency which his government possessed in European affairs, he might have peacefully dominated Europe, and at the same time developed to a still higher point the industry and trade of the country, secured for France maritime supremacy, and created a great empire overseas. If he and his successors had chosen this course, French civilisation, and the methods and ideas of absolute monarchy, might very well have dominated the world. But on the other hand he was inevitably tempted by the vision of mastery in Europe. In particular, the crumbling Spanish empire seemed to be at his mercy; he could at the expense of Spain round off the frontiers of France; he might perhaps gain possession of the riches of Spanish America. His irresistible army would make conquest easy, and there seemed to be no fear of serious opposition. Spain herself could offer no effective resistance. The Emperor, whose Austrian lands were poverty-stricken and ill-organised, was threatened by grave danger from the reviving power of the Turks. Germany was exhausted by the Thirty Years' War. The northern powers were at one another's throats. The Dutch had overthrown the House of Orange and placed their affairs in the hands of peace-loving merchants led by John de Witt; and, being jealous of the loyalty of the army to the excluded House of Orange, they had reduced their army to the lowest point. Only England might be dangerous. But the English were consumed with jealousy of the Dutch, and Louis could encourage them to destroy one another. And the new English king, Charles II., was Louis' cousin and admirer, and might, in his eagerness to free himself from Parliament, readily be bought over either to take the French king's side, or at least to remain neutral. The prospects of success in the career of European conquest were very

promising. They were too promising to be resisted; and so the tremendous power of reorganised France was gradually turned into a danger to the peace and liberty of Europe. The progress of Louis' ambitions was of such importance not only to Europe, but to the islands and to the whole British Commonwealth, that we must follow them in outline.

§ 3. *The Wars of Louis XIV.* (*to* 1688).

During the first six years of his personal rule (1661-1666) Louis remained at peace, using his splendid army only as a means of giving magnanimous help to the Emperor in his desperate struggle with the Turks, to which we shall refer later. England under her new king was friendly in spite of colonial rivalry. In 1662 Charles sold to Louis the port of Dunkirk, which Cromwell had acquired in 1658. It was a wise act on Charles' part, though his chief motive was the desire for money, but it began to arouse English jealousy of France. Louis also brought about the marriage of Charles to a Portuguese princess (1661): this was the beginning of the long unbroken alliance between England and Portugal. Portugal (annexed by Philip II. in 1580) had revolted against Spain in 1640, and the revolt had only been kept going by French help; but the peace between France and Spain in 1659 had made it difficult for Louis to go on helping Portugal. The task of helping Portugal, and thus weakening Spain, was handed over to England, which received in payment the Mediterranean fortress of Tangier and the Indian island of Bombay.

The determining factor in the relations of the western powers during these years was their trade rivalry; especially in the tropical seas. Louis watched with satisfaction the revival of the old acute jealousy between the English and the Dutch, from which he hoped to draw profit. When, in 1665, this jealousy flamed out into a great naval war, it seemed at first as if the English would win. For the English navy showed in the first two years of the war that its fighting power was as great as ever; and that, though Blake was gone, his old comrade in arms, Monk, was a worthy successor. There were fierce battles off Lowestoft in 1665, in the Downs in 1666, and in both of these the English were victorious. An English victory, however, would not have suited France. Louis therefore entered the conflict on the Dutch side. There was hard fighting between the English and the French in the West Indies during 1666-7; and

though the English held their own, the prosperity of the English Leeward Islands received a grave set-back. From this moment the trading interests in England began to look askance at France, and to fear her even more than they feared the Dutch. In the later stages of the war bad luck pursued the English. The Great Plague which broke out in 1665, and which affected part of the fleet, led to a terrible disorganisation of supply, and the Great Fire of London in 1666 completed this dislocation. The fleet had to be laid up in the winter of 1666; and in 1667 the Dutch seized their opportunity, sailed up the Medway, captured one vessel and burnt three others, and were with difficulty prevented from attacking defenceless London. Under these circumstances the English government was glad to end the war by the Peace of Breda in 1667; all the more so since the Dutch were so eager for peace as to be willing to leave in English hands the recently conquered Dutch American colony of New Netherlands, henceforward to be known as New York.[1]

The English government's readiness for peace had undoubtedly been encouraged by the alarm produced by the French intervention. And it was the fear aroused by French ambitions in another sphere which led the Dutch to make an unfavourable peace at a moment when things were going very well for them. For, while the two maritime powers were at one another's throats, Louis XIV. had at last and suddenly begun to put into operation his plans of European conquest. On the flimsy pretext that his Spanish queen, whose father (Philip IV.) had died in 1665, was entitled to inherit the Spanish Netherlands under the local law of succession to land, he sent an army into Flanders. The Spanish forces were quite unable to resist him. Europe was startled by the evidence both of the French king's overwhelming strength and of his unscrupulousness. But the Dutch were especially alarmed; the Spanish Netherlands were their only bulwark against this formidable power. They eagerly opened negotiations for alliances to check the conqueror; and in 1668 a Triple Alliance was formed by Holland, England and Sweden. It was the first sign that Europe would resist any attempt to establish an overwhelming dominion. Louis as yet preferred to avoid a war on so large a scale; and in 1668 ended what is known as the War of Devolution by the

[1] See below, Chap. iii. p. 536.

peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which gave to him a substantial part of Flanders.[1]

But the lesson was lost upon the proud king. Instead of abstaining from European aggressions, he determined to punish the Dutch. The next four years were devoted to preparations, and especially to detaching from the Dutch the allies in whom they trusted. In 1670 Louis concluded with Charles II. the secret treaty of Dover, whereby the English king undertook, in return for a large subsidy, not only to desert the Triple Alliance, but to attack the Dutch once more, and to endeavour to turn England into a Roman Catholic State.[2] It was the longing to be free from parliamentary control which led Charles to take this dishonourable course. In 1672 the Swedes also were bribed to desert the Alliance, and the Dutch stood alone. Meanwhile John de Witt, at the head of the Dutch government, was doing nothing to prepare for the coming storm. It burst suddenly in 1672, when two superb armies under the two greatest captains of the age, Condé and Turenne, poured down the Meuse and the Rhine into the Dutch territories. Frenzied with terror, and believing that they had been betrayed, the Dutch murdered John de Witt and his brother the admiral. They turned for help to the young Prince William of Orange, the frail, silent, inflexible representative of the founder of Dutch liberty, whom de Witt had kept in the background. Under desperate conditions William took up the struggle with the French king which was to occupy all his strength for the rest of his life. Once more, as in the desperate days of the struggle with Spain, the dykes were opened, and the ocean was called in to defend the land which had been won from it. And meanwhile the English fleet, in conjunction with the French, was attacking the Dutch by sea (1672-1674). There were hard-fought fights, as always, between these old foes. But the Dutch held their own, in spite of their inferiority of numbers, thanks to the brilliant leadership of their great admiral, Ruyter: the two battles of the war, off Southwold Bay (1672) and off the Texel (1673), were both drawn fights. Meanwhile in England public feeling, despite the long and bitter rivalry with the Dutch, was turning strongly against the war; Parliament expressed this hostility all the more vigorously because the knowledge of the iniquitous secret treaty of Dover was beginning to leak out; and in 1674

[1] See the map of the Netherlands, Atlas, Plate 20.
[2] See below, Chap. iv. p. 545.

this shameful attack upon a recent ally was brought to an end. Many Englishmen felt that their country ought to have been ranged on the side of the Dutch instead of against them, and under the influence of the new fear of France the long-standing jealousy of the Dutch began to diminish. But though Charles II. was forced to make peace, Louis was still able to count upon his purchased neutrality.

The Dutch had weathered the first and severest crisis of the war; and now other powers, alarmed at the menace of a French domination of Europe, came to their aid—the Emperor, and Spain, and the Elector of Brandenburg. The insolent attack upon the Dutch had led to a general European war, in which France stood practically alone. The war continued to rage for four more years; the brilliance of the French commanders and the valour of their troops won many victories; but they could gain no decision, and the wealth and prosperity which Colbert had built up was being wasted to no avail. At length, in 1678, peace was made at Nimwegen. Louis acquired from Spain the French-speaking district of Franche Comté, but this was the only result of the mighty effort which had strained his resources.[1] Externally Nimwegen marks the highest point of Louis' career; in reality it was the first step in his decline. For he had made a deliberate bid for supremacy in Europe, and he had failed.

Louis himself regarded Nimwegen, as he had regarded Aix-la-Chapelle, only as a check in his career of conquest. During the next ten years, indeed (1678-88), he maintained peace. But his insolence never reached a higher point than in these years: it was the blind insolence that causes and precedes a terrible fall. Though he claimed to be the most orthodox of Catholics, he quarrelled irremediably with the Pope, because he claimed a supremacy over the Church in France which the Pope would not yield. At the same time, to prove his orthodoxy, he instituted a pitiless persecution of the French Protestants, culminating, in 1685, in the withdrawal of the Edict of Nantes which had protected them for nearly a hundred years: the absolute monarch could not permit his subjects to differ from himself. But the Huguenots, who were chiefly to be found in towns, included a large proportion of the most industrious and prosperous of French traders and manufacturers. Driven in thousands from their own country, they carried their knowledge and skill to

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 15 (*c*).

England and to other lands; and the loss which was thus inflicted upon France was even more serious than that which was caused by the wars. The splendid prosperity of the early years of the reign was already disappearing. Finally, counting on the facts that the Dutch were tired of war, that the Emperor was engaged in a death grapple with the Turks, and that England under Charles II. could be bribed into quiescence, Louis undertook a series of the most shameless aggressions under legal forms. The treaty of Nimwegen had given him certain lands 'with their dependencies.' French tribunals were set up to determine what these dependencies were: they gave the decisions which were required of them, and large territories in Alsace were annexed on this pretext. The most important of these annexations was the great city of Strasbourg (1681).

Europe looked on with anxiety and alarm. There was even a brief, futile attempt at resistance by Spain and the Emperor in 1683; it only served to illustrate the greatness of French power, and to encourage Louis' self-confidence. But one man, checked and hampered at every turn, was grimly resolved that the Great King should pay for his insolence. This was William of Orange, a morose, unsympathetic and heartless man, who was raised to the point of greatness only by the undying resolution and the undying hate with which he watched his superb rival, and waited for the chance to take vengeance upon him. In the meanwhile, since his authority even in Holland was very insecure, he was powerless; and it seemed during these ten years as if, when he chose, Louis XIV. might have his will in Europe.

Whether this was to be so or not depended above all upon Britain. If her weight were to be thrown into the scale against Louis, he could never succeed, as time was to show. Louis partly realised this. Hitherto he had got his way with Britain easily enough, thanks to the shameless dishonour of Charles II.; and if Charles should show signs of restiveness, Louis had the whip-hand of him, because he could always turn loose upon him the angry and watchful Parliament by disclosing the secrets of Charles' dealings with himself. Louis kept up relations, through his very skilful ambassadors, with parliamentary leaders as well as with the king and the courtiers.

But Louis was not alone in watching English politics with close attention. William of Orange, whose supreme desire it was to bring England into the fray against France, was

also watching them anxiously. His connexions with the country were close; his mother was a daughter of Charles I., and he would be the heir to the Stewart thrones if Charles II. and his brother James were to die without heirs. In 1677 William strengthened his position by marrying James' eldest daughter Mary. When an agitation sprang up in England for the exclusion of James, as a Catholic, from the succession, William was deeply concerned. But his position was a very delicate one; he could only watch and wait, and keep up his relations with English political leaders.

Thus the great issues of European political history influenced the course of events in the islands; and, on the other hand, the destinies of Europe seemed to depend upon the results of the party strife which was raging in England. The English Revolution, when it suddenly came about in 1688, was almost as momentous for Europe as it was for the islands, and from 1688 onwards it is no longer possible to deal with the European story apart from the story of the islands.

§ 4. *Northern Europe: the Rise of the Hohenzollerns.*

But before we turn to the long political controversy upon which so much depended, it is necessary to say something about other aspects of European affairs which were in the future to be of great importance to the British Commonwealth, though at the moment they seemed of no concern to it.

In Northern Europe the Thirty Years' War had led to a confused series of wars in which all the northern powers were engaged; they had been brought to an end in 1660, just at the opening of our period. We need not trace these complex struggles, but it is worth while to note their general results. The most important of these, in the eyes of contemporaries, was that Sweden, which had suddenly sprung into the first rank of European States under Gustavus Adolphus, seemed to be established as the greatest of the northern powers.[1] Her armies were of the first quality. She had conquered territories which Denmark had long held on the Scandinavian mainland. She had acquired possession of Western Pomerania and the mouth of the Oder on the Baltic coast of Germany, and controlled all the shores of the Gulf of Finland, besides Finland itself. She held Bremen and Verden in North-Western Germany, and with

[1] See the maps, Atlas, Plates 9 and 26 (*a*).

them the mouths of the Elbe and Weser. No power had profited so much by the ruin of Germany. But she was exhausted by the long strain of war; she had brought upon herself many enemies, and the days of her greatness were not to last much longer, in spite of the brilliant fighting qualities shown by one after another of her kings.

Far more important, though less impressive to contemporaries, was the rise of the little State of Brandenburg, later to become the kingdom of Prussia.[1] Brandenburg owed her rise to the skill and patient labours of the first of the great Hohenzollerns, Frederick William, known as the Great Elector. When the Great Elector succeeded to his throne in 1640, during the Thirty Years' War, his lands were thinly peopled, divided and desolated by war. They fell into three distinct blocks: the electorate proper in the middle, with Berlin as its capital; some small patches of richer land on the Rhine; and the duchy of East Prussia, which was held under the suzerainty of the still large and powerful kingdom of Poland, and was separated from Brandenburg by the purely Polish district of West Prussia. In each of these separate blocks there were diets which checked and limited the power of the ruler. By the treaty of Westphalia (1648) the Great Elector had succeeded in acquiring valuable accessions of territory, which practically doubled the area of Brandenburg proper. Notably he had obtained the eastern part of Pomerania, the western and more valuable part of which fell to Sweden. But he claimed the whole of Pomerania, and henceforth regarded Sweden as his mortal foe.

In the wars of the northern States which followed the peace of Westphalia, both Sweden and Poland were engaged. The Great Elector made skilful use of the struggle. By playing the traitor alternately to Sweden and Poland he succeeded in freeing his duchy of East Prussia from Polish suzerainty. During the years of peace which followed 1660 he devoted himself to strengthening his power within his scattered dominions. He fought the diets, and practically turned his government into an absolute monarchy. He gave assiduous attention to the economic development of his poverty-stricken dominions, in order to increase their resources for maintaining an efficient army. And he created an army out of all proportion larger than the size or wealth of his

[1] There is a map showing the growth of Brandenburg-Prussia in Atlas, Plate 24 (*a*).

dominions warranted. Already the characteristic lines of Hohenzollern policy were laid down: a high degree of centralisation in government; a systematic development of the material resources of the State; and the use of these resources for the purpose of maintaining the greatest possible military power, with a view to further conquests.

When Louis XIV. attacked the Dutch, the bitter rivalry of Sweden and Brandenburg flared out again. Sweden was Louis' ally: Brandenburg therefore took the other side, and one of the most important events of the war was the battle of Fehrbellin, 1675, in which the Great Elector, to the astonishment of Europe, defeated the military might of Sweden. This battle marked the beginning of the downfall of Sweden; but it marked also the emergence of the Hohenzollern realm as a factor of importance in European affairs. The steady, unscrupulous progress by force and fraud which was to bring the Hohenzollerns in the far future to the triumphs of Sadowa and Sedan, and to the disasters of 1918, had fairly begun.

§ 5. *The Problem of the Turkish Empire.*

The changes which this period brought about in South-Eastern Europe were not less important than those in the north. The outstanding factor was a recrudescence of danger from the Turks, followed by the beginning of the collapse of Turkish power. The Turks, as we have seen,[1] had attained their greatest power in the time of the Sultan Solyman the Magnificent, the contemporary of Charles V. and of Henry VIII., who had conquered the greater part of Hungary, had threatened for a time to break into Germany, then distracted by the Reformation, and had only been beaten back with difficulty before the walls of Vienna. At that time the Turkish peril had been real and great. In all the lands which they have conquered the Turks have never shown any capacity for good government, or given any encouragement to the growth of civilisation; their power over the Christian peoples of the Balkan peninsula and (so long as it lasted) over Hungary was a mere disaster, unbalanced by any compensations; and any further extension of their dominions would have brought nothing but ill.

Fortunately, after the death of Solyman (1566), there had followed a long period when the Turkish power fell into the weakness and disorganisation which are apt to overtake a mere military ascendency. Europe had been unable to

[1] Above, Bk. III. chap. iii. p. 234. See also the map, Atlas, Plate 26 (*a*).

take advantage of this, because she was distracted by religious wars; on the other hand, because of their own difficulties, the Turks also had been unable to turn the troubles of Europe to their profit. But the Turks [1] remained in direct control of the central part of Hungary; Eastern Hungary and Transylvania recognised their suzerainty: even the narrow strip of Western Hungary which was ruled by the Emperor had to pay tribute to them; and they controlled all the south coast of the Black Sea, and all modern Rumania. In this region they had the kingdom of Poland as their neighbour. But Poland was a disorganised realm, whose elected kings had little power, being checked by a Diet of nobles who would take no action unless they were unanimous, and claimed that any one of them could veto the proceedings. The weak and divided territories of the Habsburg Emperors on the one hand, exhausted by the Thirty Years' War, and the great but unorganised kingdom of Poland on the other, formed very ineffective barriers against any serious Turkish attack, should the old militant spirit of the Turks revive.

Soon after the close of the Thirty Years' War a remarkable revival began among the Turks. It was guided and inspired by a succession of vigorous Viziers (or chief ministers) drawn from an Albanian family who had entered Turkish service. In 1663 a great attack was launched against Austrian Hungary and Moravia: it was only driven back by the aid of 30,000 French troops lent by Louis XIV. to the Emperor. Next the island of Crete, which the Venetians had long maintained for Christendom, was attacked and conquered. A vigorous war with Poland followed (1672-1676): it stirred the patriotism of the Polish knighthood, and a national hero, John Sobieski, was able by dint of unflagging valour and military skill to beat back the invaders, though they gained a good part of the Ukraine. Finally, in 1682, while Louis XIV. was quarrelling with the Emperor over the annexation of Strasbourg, and no help from France could be expected, a new attack was directed against the Austrian lands. Vienna itself was besieged (1683). It was only saved by the valour of the Poles under Sobieski, who came to its relief. Thus, twice over, the Poles had saved Christendom from a grave danger.

But the gravity of the peril roused the Christian neighbours of the Turks to united action. The Emperor, the

[1] See the maps, Atlas, Plates 9 and 26 (*a*).

Poles and the Republic of Venice formed an alliance in 1684. The Poles under John Sobieski and the imperial forces under the Duke of Lorraine struck blow after blow against the Turks. All Hungary was rapidly reconquered; and, with a sort of poetic justice, the crowning victory was won in 1687 on the very field of Mohacz, where, a hundred and sixty years before, Solyman the Magnificent had shattered the Hungarian army and made himself master of the country.

It is not surprising that, with so great an enterprise on his hands, the Emperor was unable to check the aggression of Louis XIV. during the decade 1678-1688. But by 1688 the Turkish danger was no longer serious; and thus, just at the moment when the Revolution in England deprived Louis XIV. of security on that side, the overthrow of the Turks released another enemy, the Emperor, to attack him. The war against Turkey still went on, alongside of the greater war in Western Europe. Indeed it is possible that the western war, by distracting the Emperor, saved the Turkish power from annihilation, and sentenced the Christian peoples of the Balkans to a continuance of the blighting Turkish rule. Even as it was, the peace of Carlowitz, in 1699, by which the Turkish-Austrian war was ended, confined the Turks to the south of the Danube. Henceforth theirs was a decaying power, and the problem of what was to happen to it became one of the most vexed questions of European politics.

§ 6. *The Prevalence of Absolute Monarchy in Europe.*

It was thus a period of unceasing and complicated warfare which was occupying the attention of Europe while in Britain the problems of constitutional government were being argued out afresh. And in all the experience of the European States during these troubles one lesson seemed, to contemporary observers, to stand forth clearly. This lesson was, that those States alone achieved success and security which possessed strong centralised governments, unhampered by the interferences of ignorant and meddlesome parliaments or diets. France under Louis XIV. was the greatest of European States: was not her greatness due to the strength of her government? The Emperor had begun to overthrow the local liberties of his dominions: might it not appear that his increased authority was the source of his victories over the Turks? Brandenburg was rising into prominence and

growing in prosperity : her elector would have claimed that it was the establishment of his own power at the expense of the provincial diets which had made this possible. Sweden was losing her prestige, largely because she had fallen under the rule of an oligarchy of nobles : she began to revive again when her king Charles XI. made the royal authority absolute by a *coup d'état*. Poland was prevented by her anarchic constitution from playing the part which her greatness should have made possible : it was only when the personal authority of a great man, Sobieski, gave to her a temporary unity of purpose that she was able to achieve great things. The Dutch, when they were threatened by disaster, had only been saved by falling back upon the personal leadership of William of Orange. And might it not fairly be contended that the wavering and humiliating policy of Britain was mainly due to the unceasing friction between Crown and Parliament ?

It was thus the all but unanimous opinion of Europe, supported to all appearance by the facts of history, that absolute monarchy, or some near approach to it, was the only means whereby order, strength and safety could be assured to any State. And the almost universal acceptance of this belief is a fact which ought not to be forgotten when we turn again to examine the new struggles of the English to establish national self-government on an ampler scale.

[Wakeman's *Ascendancy of France* gives a clear and vigorous account of this period. See also Seeley's *Growth of British Policy*, Abbott's *Expansion of Europe* and Airy's *Restoration* (Epochs of Modern History). The best account of the court and government of Louis XIV. is by E. Lavisse, which forms part of Lavisse's *Histoire de France*. See also Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, Grant's *French Monarchy*, and Hassall's *Louis XIV.* (Heroes of the Nations) ; Marriott and Robertson's *Growth of Prussia* ; Pontalis' *de Witt* ; Nisbet Bain's *Scandinavia* ; Lane-Poole's *Turkey* (Story of the Nations).]

CHAPTER III

RIVAL COLONIAL EMPIRES

§ 1. *International Rivalry Overseas.*

THE colonial and trading ventures of the first half of the seventeenth century, and above all those of the Dutch, had shown to the world how much wealth and strength could be drawn from systematically conducted enterprise oversea. The Dutch, though but a small people, counted as one of the greatest powers of the world, and certainly the most prosperous; and it was obvious that their strength rested almost wholly upon their oversea trade and their mercantile and naval power. Therefore, as soon as the wars of religion were over, the western European States began to take up colonial enterprise with a systematic thoroughness which none save the Dutch had earlier displayed.[1] Even the Danes strove to get a foothold in Indian trade, and acquired the island of St. Thomas in the West Indies. Even the Elector of Brandenburg built a fort and trading station in West Africa. The Dutch still enjoyed great prosperity in this period, and were still regarded by the English as their most dangerous rivals. But in fact the mercantile power of the Dutch was relatively, though not absolutely, beginning to decline. The Portuguese, having freed themselves from Spain and reconquered Brazil from the Dutch, entered upon a period of revived prosperity. But they no longer counted for much in the East: it was the growing riches of Brazil, and its valuable plantations of sugar, which now formed their main resource, and they made no new acquisitions. The Spanish empire in America was still, in extent and potential wealth, the greatest of all the over-sea empires. But the Spanish dominions lived a life apart, and counted for little in the great rivalry of the age. The two powers which threw themselves with the greatest zeal and energy into the task of building up and organising colonial enterprise were France and England. Now began

[1] For a general view of colonial enterprise during the period see the map, Atlas, Plate 48.

their keen rivalry, which was to last for a century and a half; now also the two countries began to work out systematic colonial policies, guided by their respective traditions and methods of government at home. The contrast between the principles and methods of the two powers as it was worked out in this age is as instructive as it is sharp and clear.

§ 2. *The French Colonial Empire and the Development of Canada.*

When Louis XIV. and his industrious minister Colbert assumed control of the government of France in 1661, they had almost to begin from the beginning the creation of a colonial empire. The French settlements in Canada had but a precarious existence, with a population of only about 2000, and the maritime province of Acadia had recently been annexed by Cromwell; the French West Indian settlements were little more than buccaneering headquarters, and the attempt to get a share for France of the trade of India had hitherto led to no useful results. In twenty years Colbert brought about an extraordinary change, and if his policy had not been interrupted by Louis XIV.'s great continental wars it is possible that maritime and colonial supremacy would have fallen to France.

Colbert naturally imitated the Dutch, whose methods were generally regarded as the most successful: like them he founded two great trading companies, one for the East and one for the West (1664). He also formed a body of practical business men to advise him on trade policy. But from the first the two trading companies were mainly supported by nobles and courtiers, not by the trading classes, and they were wholly dependent upon the support of the Crown. The Company of the West, which was to deal with North and South America, the West Indies and West Africa, soon broke down, and the direction of all trading and colonial ventures in these regions passed under the immediate control of government. The East India Company had a longer life, but not as yet a very prosperous one. Its first efforts were largely wasted in an attempt to establish a settlement at Madagascar, which was for some time the headquarters of French enterprise in the East. And though trading stations were started on the mainland of India at Pondicherry (near Madras) and at Chandernagore (near Calcutta), the French were never able in this period to compete with either the Dutch or the English companies in the East.

It was in North America, the West Indies and West Africa that the main French efforts were expended; and here striking results were obtained. In the West Indies, under the fostering care of Colbert, the sugar islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe began to thrive, and the French also got a foothold in the western half of the great island of Hispaniola, the oldest centre of the Spanish American power. Spain was compelled in 1678 to recognise French sovereignty over this region, which was known as San Domingo; and thus France got a possession which balanced the English ownership of Jamaica. The value attached to West Indian possessions was shown by the fierceness of the fighting in the Leeward Islands during the short Anglo-French war of 1666-7; from that time the comradeship which had been maintained by French and English adventurers in these waters came to an end, and was replaced by keen rivalry and mutual suspicion. The West Indian Islands depended wholly upon slave labour, and to secure a supply of negro slaves France established her control over Senegal, on the West African coast; just as the Dutch, the English and the Portuguese had set up stations in other parts of the coast.[1] One of the results of the French attack upon the Dutch in 1672 was that the Dutch were compelled to cede to France the West African island of Goree. There were also struggling French settlements in Guiana, on the north coast of South America. But the development of trade and settlement in all this region was gravely hampered by the prevalence of buccaneering. The period from 1660 to 1675 was the very heyday of the buccaneers, among whom the French were by far the most active, though Dutchmen and Englishmen shared in the ugly game. The buccaneers were often guilty of the wildest deeds: this was the time when Morgan and Captain Kidd won their notoriety among the English, Grammont and Ducasse among the French. Not until these evil traditions were got rid of could the riches of the West Indies be fully developed; and it was not until 1698 that the European powers agreed to take common action to crush them out.

The main efforts of Colbert and his master were, however, devoted to the development of Canada. They sent a little army of regulars to check the ravages of the fierce Iroquois,[2]

[1] See the map of West Africa, Atlas, Plate 64 (*c*).
[2] See above, Bk. IV. chap. ii. p. 380.

and persuaded officers and men to settle down in the danger zone by giving them grants of land; and the curbing of the Iroquois removed the chief obstacle to the development of Canada. They despatched carefully selected parties of emigrants, and provided dowries for women who would go out to marry colonists. They sent out farm implements and live stock for the use of the settlers, established fisheries, started shipbuilding, and carried out surveys for minerals. In about ten years the population of the colony was multiplied fourfold. All this was done at the king's expense: unlike the English colonies, French Canada never during this period paid its own expenses, but was always a burden on the mother country.

Because Canada was thus wholly dependent upon the king, and also because the government of Louis XIV. in France was the very model of an absolute monarchy, there was no consultation whatsoever of the colonists in the management of the colony's affairs. When the greatest French colonial statesman of the period, Count Frontenac, summoned in 1672 a meeting of 'estates' in Canada, he was sharply pulled up, and told that no such assembly could be permitted. All authority rested with the Governor or military head and the Intendant or financial and legal head, both of whom were appointed by the king; and their frequent differences were always referred to France for settlement. All land in Canada was held from the king by feudal tenure, whereas in the English colonies it was held in full freehold. Every male inhabitant between the ages of 14 and 70 was under the obligation of military service, and had to submit to frequent drill. It was this centralisation of all power, and this strict military discipline, which alone enabled French Canada to hold its own against its far more populous English neighbours.

No emigrant might enter Canada without the king's approval. Since Louis was resolved to keep New France strictly orthodox, he refused to admit any Huguenots, and thus sacrificed an element that might have been of the highest value in the development of the new lands: there is a marked contrast between this policy and the general religious toleration allowed in the English colonies. When systematic persecution, culminating in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), began to drive the Huguenots out of France, they went to the English colonies and to the Dutch settlements at the Cape of Good Hope, and thus were lost to France for ever. Finally, all the trade of Canada was

strictly confined to the mother country and closely regulated by government.

Although Canada throve and grew under the fostering care of the government, it did not thrive so greatly or grow so rapidly as the English colonies, where there was very little government control, but a great deal of freedom. In particular not all the insistence of Colbert and the king could turn Canada into a self-supporting country: the colonists would almost have starved if they had not been largely supported from France. One main reason for this was that the settlers, unlike their English neighbours, were loth to fix themselves down to the humdrum work of cultivation: they preferred the glorious and often lucrative adventures of fur-trapping and exploration, and the most distinctive element in the population consisted of the *coureurs-de-bois*, who spent their lives in the wilds. There was no real parallel to this class in the English colonies.

Geographical facts largely accounted for this marked feature of Canadian life.[1] The soil was not rich and fertile, like that of the English colonies, and therefore gave poor rewards to the farmer. On the other hand, while the English were shut off from the interior by the numerous wooded ranges of the Alleghany Mountains, running parallel with the coast, the mighty river St. Lawrence led the French settlers naturally and easily into the vast interior. Hence, in spite of their small numbers, it was the French and not the English who explored the vast central plain of America and the waters of the great lakes. Missionary zeal, in which the French far surpassed the English, accentuated this tendency; and moreover the French showed on the whole a far greater skill and tact in getting into friendly relations with the Indian tribes.

The period with which we are dealing was in fact the great age of North American exploration, and it was wholly to the bold explorers of French Canada that the world owed the knowledge of the great central plain and its mighty rivers and lakes. Many travellers mapped out the Great Lakes; others found their way through the vast forests to Hudson's Bay. But still more remarkable were two great river journeys of this time.[2] In 1673 a Jesuit missionary, Père Marquette, and a trader named Joliet made their way from Lake Huron to the Wisconsin river, and thence down the Mississippi as far as the Arkansas river. In 1681-2 a still greater explorer, the gallant Sieur de La Salle, made his way

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 55.

[2] *Ibid.*

from the bottom of Lake Michigan down the Illinois river and thence all the way to the mouth of the Mississippi in the Gulf of Mexico, where he set up a pillar proclaiming the sovereignty of Louis le Grand.[1] La Salle wished to plant a new colony here. The project was not carried out until 1717, after his death and that of the Great King. But he had opened up for France the vast central plain and prepared the way for far-reaching imperial claims which, had they been made effective, would have shut in the populous and thriving English colonies to a narrow strip of coast-land. Manifestly these were claims which the English settlers could not allow to go by default; and thus, even before the English Revolution, it had become apparent that the French were likely to be more dangerous rivals than the Dutch had ever been. They would have been still more formidable if Louis XIV.'s costly and wasteful foreign wars had not, in the last period of his reign, largely undone all the brilliant work of Colbert. Under the strain of foreign war the king even felt himself compelled to stop emigration to Canada, lest it should weaken the man-power of France.

§ 3. *A New Era in British Colonial Policy.*

If Louis XIV. and Colbert showed vigour and enterprise in developing the French colonial empire and defining the principles on which it was to be administered, the government of Charles II. was not less active and was even more far-seeing. Indeed, the twenty years following the Restoration form one of the most vitally important periods in the history of the British Commonwealth; for not only was the number of English settlements increased, but the main principles of English colonial policy, which were to be followed down to the time of the American Revolution, were defined and worked out with the utmost clearness.

All the leading statesmen of the Restoration showed a real and intelligent interest in colonial problems. The king himself was interested, in his idle way; still more his brother the Duke of York, and his cousin the gallant Prince Rupert. Clarendon, who was all-powerful in the first years of the reign, claimed later that he had 'used all the endeavours that he could to bring His Majesty to have a great esteem for his plantations, and to encourage the improvement of them.' The claim was a just one; Clarendon's was the dominant

[1] A vivid account of these adventures is to be found in Parkman's *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West.*

influence in colonial policy during the first seven years after the Restoration, when the new policy was mainly defined. Bennet, afterwards Lord Arlington, made a good second. Monk represented the keen imperialism of Cromwell. Ashley, the famous Lord Shaftesbury,[1] also a Cromwellian, gave close attention to colonial questions, and his political action was largely determined by this interest. He brought into the service of the colonies his friend the philosopher John Locke. At the very opening of the reign a new body was set up, known as the Council of Trade and Plantations, of which Locke later became Secretary; and though it was soon abolished, it was replaced by special Committees of the Privy Council. The members of these bodies paid the closest attention to their work, as their records show; they did their best to work out an imperial policy, and to provide an efficient administrative centre for the common affairs of all the members of the empire. Whatever criticism may be made of the government of Charles II., it deserves the credit of having shown a keener and more intelligent interest in colonial problems than any of its predecessors, or than any of its successors down to the nineteenth century.

The most important aspect of the work of this period was the attempt to define the principles of colonial policy, and to fix the relations between the colonies and the mother country. The principal aims of the new policy were to ensure that English trade and industry should profit by the expansion of the colonies, and that the empire as a whole should be bound together by the bonds of trade. England was to become the central market and workshop as well as the administrative capital of the whole empire; and the empire's trade policy was to be fixed by the government and Parliament of England. The idea that the colonies should be consulted in defining the lines of this policy did not enter anybody's mind: indeed such an idea would, at this date, have been wholly impracticable. There were good reasons why England should claim to make some profit out of the trade of the colonies. She had to bear the whole cost of their defence. Weak and scattered as they were, they would have lain at the mercy of the other colonial powers if they had not been able to count upon the protection of the mother country, and if the navy had not held the seas. The customs duties levied in England on goods going from or to the colonies formed the only means by which the

[1] There is a good short life of Shaftesbury by H. D. Traill.

colonies were asked to contribute to the cost of their common defence.

From these trade advantages Scotland was strictly excluded; Ireland, though at first admitted to the privileges of colonial trade, was later shut out from them. Scotland and Ireland were, indeed, treated as foreign countries under the protective system of the Restoration, and many of their products were excluded not only from the colonies but from England itself. It is futile to condemn this policy. It was the inevitable and logical result of the protectionist theory which all men accepted as obviously true, not only in England but in all other countries.

The new policy was outlined in the Navigation Act of 1660, which was one of the first Acts of the Restoration; and four more Acts strengthening its provisions followed during the next twelve years. The Navigation Acts not only re-enacted the chief provision of the Act of 1651, whereby inter-imperial trade was to be carried on only in English or colonial ships; they added the very important provision that certain 'enumerated articles' of colonial produce, the chief of which were sugar, tobacco, cotton and dye-stuffs, should not be shipped to any country save England or another colony, so that foreign countries desiring colonial goods would in the main have to purchase them in England. In 1664 the trade system was completed by the provision that all foreign goods destined for the colonies should first be landed in England; thus England would become the central emporium of the whole empire. These provisions were much criticised from the first, and they were evaded on a large scale, especially by the New England colonies. But they did in a large degree contribute to determine the lines of colonial trade. Thus the theory that imperial unity could be based upon trade regulations and restrictions was given a full trial; it lasted for a century, and ended in the American Revolution.

Yet it would not be fair to blame the statesmen of the Restoration for the ultimate failure of their plans. According to the ideas of the age, they were setting about the unification of the British realms on a solid economic basis. Their policy did much to stimulate the growth of the mercantile marine both in England and in the colonies, and to strengthen the foundations of naval power. And it should be remembered that even in matters of trade their policy was far less restrictive than that of any other colonising power, since they left the colonies free to trade directly with

the whole world in non-enumerated goods, while Spain and France and the Dutch maintained a complete monopoly for themselves of all colonial trade.

And in other than trade concerns the new imperial policy was immeasurably more enlightened than that of any other country. In the first place, it was assumed as a matter of course that every colonial settlement should have a representative assembly alongside of the governor and council appointed by the Crown or the Crown's representatives. This feature of local self-government was indeed the most distinctive and peculiar characteristic of the English system. Every English colony enjoyed it ; no colony founded by any other nation obtained it. One of the objects of colonial policy during the period seems to have been that of ensuring that the government of the colonies was carried on upon a uniform system, with a governor and council and a representative assembly. And these assemblies were left with full power to make laws not inconsistent with the laws of England, and to impose taxes for their own needs. No attempt was ever made to impose direct taxes upon the colonies by the authority of the English Parliament or government ; while as for legislation, it was generally assumed that, except in the sphere of trade, the colonial assemblies should alone legislate on colonial issues, the imperial Parliament dealing only with matters of common concern. In that respect also the English colonies stand alone among the European settlements of this age. In brief, the new imperial system contemplated that England should be responsible for the common defence of the whole empire, and that her government should direct its foreign policy and its trade policy ; but that in all other respects the colonies should be self-supporting and self-governing.

The readiness of the Restoration government to encourage self-government in the colonies was shown not only in the constitutions granted to new settlements made during the period, but in the issue of charters to some of the earlier colonies. Thus in 1661 Jamaica, conquered by Cromwell six years before, was given a representative system of the normal pattern ; while the charters granted to Connecticut in 1662 and to Rhode Island in 1663 were still more striking. Neither of these colonies had yet obtained a formal charter, though both had set up governments of their own. Charles II. had no reason to love the New Englanders, and the two settlements were at his mercy. Yet their new charters recognised the system they had set up for themselves, and

authorised them not merely to elect representative assemblies but actually to appoint their own governors.

One further feature of the new imperial system which presents a sharp contrast with the policy of France deserves special emphasis. There was to be complete liberty of conscience in religious matters. The credit for laying down this principle probably belongs mainly to Shaftesbury and his friend John Locke. Shaftesbury deeply cared about the ideal of religious toleration, which he had learnt from Cromwell; and his policy at home, as well as in the colonies, was largely influenced by this aim. In an advertisement intended to attract settlers to the new colony of Carolina the first place was given to the statement that 'there is full and free liberty of conscience granted.' Even James Duke of York instructed the Governor of New York that he must permit 'all persons of all religion soever quietly to inhabit . . . without giving them any disturbance whatsoever.' One of the principal grounds of the standing quarrel with Massachusetts which went on throughout the period was the demand of the English government that religious toleration should be allowed in that colony, and that the franchise should not be restricted to church members. In view of the persecution of Dissenters and Roman Catholics which was going on in England, this insistence upon toleration may seem difficult to explain. But the persecution in England was mainly the work of the Cavalier Parliament, and, as we shall see, government struggled in vain against it.

§ 4. *The Establishment of New Colonies.*

The work of this remarkable period in the expansion of English trade and in the creation of new English settlements abroad was as important as its work in the definition of imperial policy.

The East India Company entered upon a period of great prosperity, thanks largely to government encouragement. It had long since been turned into a regular joint stock company with a large capital. In 1661 the company obtained a new charter empowering it to coin money, to raise garrisons, and to exercise jurisdiction over the inhabitants of its settlements. And in 1668 the king handed over to the company the island of Bombay, which had come to him as part of the dowry of his Portuguese wife. Bombay was the first territorial possession held by the company in full sovereignty.

India in this period was beginning to fall into turmoil. The Mogul Emperor Aurangzib was trying to establish his direct rule over Southern India, where his predecessors had never established their supremacy,[1] and in the course of his campaigns he had roused against him the redoubtable bands of the Mahrattas in the hill country behind Bombay. Under their daring chief Sivaji they were raiding vast areas of territory, and already the downfall of the Mogul empire was beginning to loom ahead. In this state of things the Company had to be prepared to defend itself. That was why it needed garrisons. Its agents showed that they were well able to hold their own, and even a dim notion of the possibility of making territorial acquisitions began to be entertained, in the later part of the period, by some of its leaders. But in spite of these troubles—the Company was at open war with the Mogul empire in 1686—its trade was so active that its shares sold at a premium of 500 per cent.

Again, an attempt was made to organise the African trade, under a company formed by royal charter in 1662 and reconstructed in 1672. Its main business was the iniquitous supply of slaves; it monopolised the supply of slaves to all the English colonies, and for that purpose maintained trading ports on the Gambia and on the Gold Coast.[2] No one had yet begun to feel any sense of shame about this iniquitous traffic, in which all nations shared: without a supply of slave labour the sugar, cotton and tobacco plantations of the West Indies and of North America could scarcely have been carried on, and men still cozened themselves into the belief that it was a boon to the negroes to be brought under civilising influences.

In the West Indies the development of the English islands received constant attention from the Privy Council; and in spite of the damage done in the French war of 1666-7, this was a period of steady development. The Leeward Islands were given a distinct government; and the Bahama Islands were colonised. Towards the buccaneers the English government followed a wavering policy. The traditions of Drake seemed in some degree to protect them, and the notorious Morgan was for a time actually appointed Governor of Jamaica. But on the whole the tendency was to repudiate them. Their nefarious activities were in fact interfering with the growth of the valuable trade of the islands, which

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 59.
[2] See the map of West Africa, Atlas, Plate 64 (*c*).

was to become in the next century the most lucrative traffic in the world.

But it was to the continent of North America that the energy of the English government, as of the French, was mainly turned; and this period saw the sporadic and disconnected settlements of the first half of the century transformed into a continuous line of thriving and populous States.[1] In 1663 a patent was issued to Clarendon, Shaftesbury, Monk and others empowering them to found a colony to the south of Virginia, under the name of Carolina. The plan of the colony was drawn up with the utmost care, and John Locke, the greatest political philosopher of the age, was asked to devise its constitution. This constitution was far too elaborate to be carried into effect in detail; but the fact that Locke was asked to draw it up showed how seriously the work of colonisation was regarded. Carolina soon broke into two distinct settlements, of which the southern (with its capital at Charleston) became the most orderly and prosperous. Both depended upon slave labour; and both had the universal system of an elected assembly with a governor and council.

In the next year, 1664, an attack was directed against the Dutch settlement of the New Netherlands;[2] and, as the Dutch had earlier conquered the Swedish settlements on the Delaware, their overthrow meant that the whole coastline between New England and Virginia passed into English hands. This attack was one of the immediate causes of Charles II.'s first Dutch war, which was essentially the outcome of the intense commercial rivalry of the two nations; and when peace was made (1667) the whole of this valuable area became permanently an English possession. The importance of this acquisition can scarcely be exaggerated. Not only did it unite the northern with the southern colonies, but it gave control over the all-important line of the Hudson river,[3] a deep cleft through the hills, which formed the main line of communication with French Canada, as it still is to-day; while the tributary valley of the Mohawk, coming in from the west, afforded the only clear passage through the mountain belt south of the St. Lawrence, and therefore gave access to the Great Lakes and the central plain. The French had long since realised the importance of this great

[1] For what follows see the general map of the colonisation of North America, Atlas, Plate 54 (*a*).

[2] See the map of the Middle Colonies, Atlas, Plate 54 (*c*).

[3] See the special map of the Hudson Valley, Atlas, 56 (*a*).

waterway. They already possessed the northern part of it, as far as Lake Champlain, and had dreamed of acquiring the rest, and so splitting the English colonies into two blocks. Some of the fiercest fighting of the next century took place along this line. What is more, the possession of the Hudson Valley brought the English into contact with the Iroquois, the best organised as well as the fiercest of the Indian tribes, whose chief centres were along the line of the Mohawk river. Friendly relations were early established with the Iroquois, who formed a useful check to the French; and the headquarters for negotiations with the Indian tribes came to be the Dutch trading post of Orange, near the junction of the Mohawk and the Hudson, which was now renamed Albany.

The area conquered from the Dutch was granted to the Duke of York, from whom came the name of the State of New York. At New York itself (formerly New Amsterdam) and in the Hudson Valley were settled a mixture of many European peoples, among whom, of course, the Dutch predominated; but English settlers, mostly immigrants from New England, were almost as numerous as the Dutch, and this largely accounted for the ease with which the colony was conquered, and the readiness with which it accommodated itself to the new régime. It is noteworthy that this settlement was the first in which the British system had to deal with conquered subjects of European stock. Perhaps this was the reason why the establishment of representative institutions was delayed until 1683. But local self-government was set up immediately; and the Dutch found that their own usages were not interfered with, and that no attempt was made to force them into an English mould. Within twenty years they had obtained a system of self-government such as the Dutch company had never allowed to them, and the colony, freed from friction with its neighbour, entered upon an era of great prosperity.

In the area which extended from the Hudson to Delaware Bay the Duke of York made large grants to Sir George Carteret and others, who established here a new colony to which they gave the name of New Jersey: it was at first divided into two. Into this colony large numbers of Quakers were admitted—they still form a substantial element of the population of parts of this country—and here they enjoyed complete religious toleration and the usual self-governing rights.

On the other side of Delaware Bay lay the land in which

the Swedes had principally settled, though they had never been numerous. This region, for a time, the Duke of York retained under his own control; it was later to be attached for a time to Pennsylvania, but was ultimately to become the little colony of Delaware. In all these new areas the English found themselves faced by the task of governing European settlers of different races from their own. No serious difficulty was felt: the practice of local self-government made the task easy.

Behind New Jersey lay a rich and fertile region on the far side of the river Potomac. Here, in 1681, William Penn, the Quaker, got a huge grant of land from Charles II. in payment of a debt due to Penn's father, the admiral who had conquered Jamaica. Penn had already been concerned in the settlement of Quakers in the neighbouring region of New Jersey. He now set himself to organise a new settlement, freely open to all comers, which, under his benevolent guidance, came very soon to be known as the freest and most liberal of all the colonies, and attracted so great a stream of immigrants that, though it was the latest of the series, it soon began to take rank with Massachusetts and Virginia, the oldest and strongest of them all. Penn's colony, to which he gave the name of Pennsylvania, was distinguished by its honourable and generous treatment of the Indian tribes with which it had to deal, and by its unwillingness to take part in any warlike enterprises. Its capital, Philadelphia ('brotherly love'), on the banks of the Potomac, was the first town in the modern world to be laid out on a systematic and orderly plan.

The completion of the settlement and organisation of the American coast from Maine to South Carolina did not exhaust the activity of this enterprising age. In 1670 two daring French *coureurs-de-bois*, having quarrelled with the Governor of French Canada, suggested the foundation of a company to develop a fur trade in the wild country north of the French colonies, approachable from Hudson's Bay. A charter was granted to a new Hudson's Bay Company with Prince Rupert as its governor, and from that time onwards there was always a trade going on in the vast region which came to be known as Prince Rupert's Land, though the French claimed that this trade was illegitimate. Here was appearing another ground of quarrel with the French.

The result of the systematic and strenuous work of the five and twenty years following the Restoration was that the English lands in North America were consolidated and

organised, and were far better able to resist attack or to undertake further expansion than they had been when Charles II. came to the throne. Not only was their trade expanding, but they had become the natural place of refuge for men desiring a new home, whether they came from England or from other lands. Persecuted French Huguenots, Germans driven out by the severities of the Archbishop of Salzburg or by the ruin and devastation of the Palatinate which was one of the results of Louis XIV.'s wars, naturally turned to these free lands of the New World, where a religious toleration existed such as was known nowhere else, and where free men had a unique opportunity of sharing in the control of their own destinies. Already the British Commonwealth was a family of free States, like nothing else that had ever existed in the world.

§ 5. *A Period of Friction.*

During the first twenty years of Charles II. a great transformation had thus taken place in the English empire. The Atlantic seaboard from Maine to South Carolina was continuously English. A clearly defined economic policy for the empire as a whole had been laid down. The system of local self-government and religious toleration had become generally characteristic of the English colonies, both on the mainland and in the West Indies. And, at headquarters, the Committees of the Privy Council (especially as reorganised in 1675) had provided something like a central machinery of government, issuing instructions to governors in all the colonies.

But there were manifest defects in the system. In the first place, the governors could not always be trusted to act as agents for the central power ; and this was especially true in New England, where the governors were appointed by the colonists themselves. In the second place, the new economic system was widely disregarded, and the restrictions of the Navigation Acts were openly defied. This also was especially the case in New England : reports submitted by a very able agent, Edward Randolph, who was sent across to study the situation, drew a gloomy picture of New England's defiant attitude. Finally, there was no common organisation for the colonies as a whole, and no provision for the common defence. This was especially serious in the northern colonies, where men were already beginning to be perturbed by the possibility of a French

attack: the French were claiming ownership of the Iroquois country, which would have brought them into dangerous proximity to New England and New York. Influenced by these considerations, Charles II. and James II. proposed (largely on the advice of Randolph) to undertake a policy of increased centralisation in America.

There was much to be said in favour of such a policy, if it could be effected without an invasion of colonial liberties. But the date at which the new policy was undertaken was ominous. In 1681, as we shall see, Charles II. had practically established absolute power in England; and he was busily engaged in revising borough charters in order to get control over Parliament. The same high-handed methods were adopted with the colonies. Massachusetts was required, on a plea of *quo warranto*, to show cause why its charter should not be annulled, and after a judicial inquiry, the charter was cancelled. The charters of the other New England colonies and of New Jersey were likewise threatened. Even Massachusetts submitted with extraordinary mildness. James II. next proceeded to set up a single general government for the whole region from the Delaware to Maine, under a single governor, Sir Edmund Andros, whose task was to unify the colonies and organise the enforcement of the trade laws.

How this policy would have been worked out in detail, and what relation would have been established between the individual colonies and the new central authority, was never displayed; for before Andros was well in the saddle, before a new charter had been granted to Massachusetts, and before the old charters of the other colonies had even been cancelled, the proceedings were interrupted by the Revolution of 1688. But, judging by his other actions, it is safe to assume that the methods of James II. would have been high-handed and tyrannical, and that the liberties of the colonies would have been gravely impaired. Certainly the proceedings of James II. and of Andros went far beyond anything that was ever dreamt of by George III. and his advisers. This makes the submissiveness of the colonies all the more surprising: it is, indeed, only explicable on the assumption that the need for some co-ordination of colonial government was widely felt.

The Revolution put a stop to this. But in doing so it almost certainly prevented a breach in that tradition of self-government which had hitherto been the most distinctive feature of the English colonial system. Indeed,

the events of this last period in the great colonial age of the Restoration showed that the Revolution itself, and the constitutional struggle which led up to it, were as important to the colonies as they were to the islands. They showed that the political liberties in which the colonies rejoiced, and in which they were almost unique among the States of the world, were ultimately dependent upon the maintenance and extension of free institutions in the mother country.

They were dependent also upon something else. The absolutist policy of James in England and in the colonies rested upon the support of Louis XIV. of France: under Louis' direction absolutism was already triumphant in Canada, whence it threatened the divided colonies. That danger had to be averted: not only the triumph of political liberty in England, but the defeat of absolutism in the New World, was necessary if the character of freedom which the British Commonwealth had already achieved was to be made permanent. On every ground the Revolution of 1688 was an event of moment to the whole Commonwealth.

[Payne's *European Colonies*; C. M. Andrews' *The Colonial Period*; Grant's *History of Canada*; Abbott's *Expansion of Europe*; Egerton's *British Colonial Policy*; Lucas' *Historical Geography of the British Colonies*; Parkman's *La Salle, The Old Régime in Canada*, and *Count Frontenac*; Doyle's *English in America*; G. L. Beer's *Old Colonial System*; Hertz's *Old Colonial System*; Christie's *Life of Shaftesbury*; Channing's *History of the United States*; Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*; Hunter's *British India*. Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power on History* begins at the Restoration, and is very important for colonial history.]

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ENGLAND

(A.D. 1660-1688)

§ 1. *The First Rudiments of a Cabinet and of Political Parties: Clarendon*, 1660-7.

THE reign of Charles II. is sometimes regarded as a period of political reaction, when monarchy regained much of its old prestige and power, and when the doctrines of Divine Right and Passive Obedience were not only accepted in theory but acted upon. That is a very misleading view. Only at the end of the reign, and during the short reign of James II., was there a serious attempt at absolute government. The greater part of the reign of Charles II. was a period of real constitutional progress, in which Parliament, strongly royalist though it was in sentiment, added greatly to its own powers, and made good its claim to a decisive voice in the main questions of national policy.

The period also saw a real, though unconscious, advance towards the creation of the machinery by which the control of Parliament over the government could be made effective. In the long run this machinery was to consist of the conduct of affairs by a small cabinet of responsible ministers, drawn from the party which had a majority in the House of Commons. But before that could happen, there had to be a coherent group of ministers forming a cabinet and acting together; there had to be organised political parties; and it had to be recognised that Parliament must be consulted not only about legislation and taxation, but about all important questions of national policy. In all these respects the reign of Charles II. saw a great advance. The nature of the advance can best be observed by tracing the successive periods into which the reign falls.

The first period, 1660-1667, was the period during which Clarendon was the dominant figure. But he was not the only minister. There was a little group whom the king specially consulted, since the Privy Council was now too

big and too varied in character to deal with confidential business; but, as there was no real agreement among the members of this group, some of whom were perpetually intriguing against Clarendon, they can at most be described as the rudiments or outline of a 'Cabinet.'

Clarendon's attitude, both in politics and religion, was closely in accord with that of the majority in Parliament. Yet even he would probably not have wished to go so far as Parliament in persecuting the Puritans (or, as they should henceforward be called, the Dissenters); and the king himself, who was pledged to a policy of toleration, and would have liked to deal leniently with the Catholics, as well as some of his lesser advisers like Buckingham and Ashley, who had Dissenting sympathies, would certainly have followed a different policy had they been free to do so. The policy of religious persecution, whatever we may think of it, was due to Parliament and showed that Parliament intended to have the deciding voice upon religious questions, which the Tudors and the early Stewarts had always held to be specially within the sphere of the Crown. At the end of 1662 and in 1663 the king tried to get an Act passed allowing him to dispense with the Act of Uniformity and other Acts. Not only was it thrown out, but Parliament adopted its severest measures against the Dissenters—the Conventicle Act and the Five Mile Act—as if in direct reply to the king's attempt.

Again, foreign policy had always been held to belong peculiarly to the king and his ministers, and Clarendon shared this view. But Parliament insisted upon being consulted; and throughout the whole period foreign affairs continually influenced domestic politics. Parliament was indignant at the sale of Dunkirk to France in 1662—in itself a wise act. While it did not at first oppose the first Dutch war, it attached an 'appropriation clause' to its money grants, as a means of making sure that the money was spent for the purposes for which it was voted; and this device, which greatly increased the power of Parliament, became a regular practice. When the Dutch war began to go wrong, and stories of mismanagement leaked out, the Cavalier Parliament was as bold in its attack upon Clarendon as the early Parliaments of Charles I. had been in their attacks upon Buckingham, and it was far more successful. It impeached Clarendon (1667)—only seven years after the Restoration—and forced him to go into banishment; and though Charles was not sorry to be rid of the stiff and formal minister

whose upright industry was a perpetual rebuke to himself, the blow to the royal power was none the less severe.

Finally, even when Clarendon had fallen, Parliament still insisted upon inquiring into the way in which its large grants had been spent. Nor would it vote enough to clear the spendthrift king from his financial embarrassments; though he was deep in debt to the London bankers, and had to spend a large part of his revenue in interest on his loans. There had indeed grown up during the Clarendon period a definite opposition. It was known as the Country Party, and it had its own recognised leaders, notably Sir W. Coventry, whose father had been one of Charles I.'s most faithful servants. The steady supporters of government were known as the Court Party. Thus the rudiments of organised parties were appearing.

§ 2. *The Cabal: Religious Toleration, Secret Dealings with France, and Parliamentary Opposition*, 1667-73.

In the next period (1667-1673), sick of the High Church Cavaliers, who had proved so much less submissive than he had hoped, Charles entrusted the main conduct of affairs to a group of men of quite a different character: the change was so great as almost to resemble a modern change of ministry. By a curious coincidence, the initials of the five chief members of this group spelt the word 'Cabal,' for which reason the name has always been specially attached to this ministry. All five were alike in favouring a policy of religious toleration: Clifford and Arlington (to whom Charles gave his fullest confidence), because they were secretly Catholics; Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale because they had connexions with the Dissenters. Ashley (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury),[1] who was much the ablest of the group, was an old Cromwellian, and a genuine believer in toleration, for its own sake; and he had given his ardent support to the king's attempt to relax the penal laws in 1662-3.

At first the new government won popularity by joining with the Dutch and the Swedes in the Triple Alliance, which helped to persuade Louis XIV. to stop his aggressions in the Netherlands.[2] But soon their foreign policy began to veer round. Louis XIV. was eager to break up the Triple Alliance in order to wreak vengeance on the Dutch, and wanted to

[1] There is a short life of Shaftesbury by H. D. Traill.
[2] See above, Chap. ii. p. 509.

buy England over. Charles, tired of his money difficulties with Parliament, was very ready to be bought. He was ready even to attempt the introduction of Roman Catholicism into England, with the aid of France, since he regarded the Roman faith as favourable to monarchical power.

On this basis secret negotiations were opened with France in 1669, and they led to the secret treaty of Dover in 1670, whereby, in return for large French subsidies, Charles promised to join Louis in attacking the Dutch, and to declare himself a Catholic at a suitable moment. This monstrous and dishonourable conspiracy could not safely be communicated to the Protestant members of the Cabal; it was known only to Clifford and Arlington, who alone signed the secret treaty. But as the alliance with France and the receipt of French subsidies would have to be explained, a second and sham treaty was started, in which Buckingham and Ashley were led to believe that they were fully consulted. Ashley, deeply interested in trade and colonies, was not unwilling to profit by the ruin of the Dutch, and as he desired to grant a toleration to the Nonconformists, to which Parliament would never agree, he was ready to accept French subsidies towards the cost of the war and thus free the Crown to suspend the persecuting laws. So the sham treaty was solemnly signed by the whole Cabal in 1671, and it was agreed to attack the Dutch in 1672. But as a policy of this kind could not succeed without some public support, Charles conceived the idea of winning over the Dissenters by granting them toleration by an exercise of the royal authority, in defiance of Parliament. Ashley and those who thought with him were not unwilling to admit of this extension of royal authority as the only means of obtaining toleration. Protestantism and English political liberty were thus simultaneously endangered; and the Dissenters and their friends were to be used as tools for their overthrow.

Two events prepared the way for the sudden change of policy which had thus been prepared. One was what is called the Stop of the Exchequer (January 1672), whereby Charles suddenly suspended the repayment of his loans from the London bankers, though he still paid interest. Ashley vainly protested against this dishonest folly, which made it impossible for the bankers to meet their obligations to those who had deposited money with them, drove many of them into bankruptcy, dislocated the trade of London for a time, and made the new policy highly unpopular. The second preparatory act was the issue by proclamation of

a Declaration of Indulgence, whereby the king, in virtue of his 'supreme power in ecclesiastical matters,' suspended all the penal laws. During the next year a multitude of Dissenting places of worship were licensed, and both Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters enjoyed a brief interval of freedom. But it was freedom bought by the disregard of the laws: the laws might be unjust, but they were still LAWS. It remained to be seen whether by such means it would be possible to win for the royal power the support of men who had executed a king for less daring disregard of the laws of the land.

At first the Dissenters seemed to be willing to profit by the Indulgence; and so far the conspiracy was going well. But everything depended on the success of the war, which was to win popularity for the new policy, and fill the Treasury with the plunder of Dutch commerce. And from the first the war went badly.[1] The Dutch (who, though they knew it not, were fighting for the political liberties of England as well as for their own) fought with such desperate heroism on sea, while Louis' armies threatened their very existence on land, that they held the English fleet at bay far more successfully than in either of the previous Dutch wars. The plunder that was to be got from Dutch commerce was not forthcoming. Within a year the king was financially as much embarrassed as ever, in spite of French subsidies; nor was it easy to borrow money after the Stop of the Exchequer. There was no help for it: Parliament had to be summoned (1673).

It was still the same Parliament which had been elected in 1661, in the first flush of enthusiasm over the restoration of the monarchy. But its spirit in 1673 was very different from that of 1661. The members met in high indignation. They acutely resented the Dutch war, all the more because it was unsuccessful. They feared France, and suspected that the king was unduly subservient to that power. But above all they were indignant at the Declaration of Indulgence. Not only was it a repudiation of their deliberate policy against the Dissenters. Far more serious, they began to suspect that its real purpose was to favour Roman Catholicism. Whispers of the secret treaty of Dover began to leak out. Ashley (now Earl of Shaftesbury) heard how he had been duped, and, being dismissed from office, threw his great ability on to the side of the opposition, vowing vengeance against the king. Most serious of all, the Declaration of Indulgence implied the assertion that the king was

[1] See above, Chap. ii. p. 514.

above the laws, and need only carry into effect such as pleased him. If that were so, if the Crown really possessed such a suspending power, of what value was the legislative function of Parliament? It is noteworthy that the friends of the Dissenters in Parliament (and there were a good many) were quite as resolute as the Cavaliers in their resistance to these unconstitutional claims as well as in their fears of Roman Catholicism. This led to a certain reconciliation; and a bill for the relief of the Protestant Dissenters was actually carried through the House of Commons, though the Bishops secured its rejection in the House of Lords. By taking up a truly constitutional attitude, the persecuted Dissenters were preparing for a real toleration, a toleration based upon consent and not merely upon authority.

Charles saw before him, if he resisted, the possibility of having 'to go on his travels again.' He yielded completely. He withdrew the Declaration. He gave his consent to a Test Act, whose purpose was to exclude Roman Catholics from all public offices by requiring officials to take the Anglican sacrament and repudiate the doctrine of Transubstantiation. The Duke of York and Sir Thomas Clifford both retired rather than take the Test, and so confessed themselves Catholics and intensified men's fears. The fears were further increased when, during the actual session of Parliament, James married as his second wife a Roman Catholic princess, Mary of Modena. His first wife, a daughter of Clarendon, had been a Protestant. But she had borne him only daughters. If he should now have a son, the prospect of an indefinite succession of Catholic kings opened before the nation. In that case, could the royal authority safely be allowed to retain its present strength? Even staunch Cavaliers began to doubt.

§ 3. *Danby and the Organisation of Political Parties*, 1673-78.

The storm of 1673 had swept away the Cabal, and for the time being wrecked the great conspiracy. Charles recognised that he must bring his government into accord with the sentiments of Parliament, and therefore took as his chief minister a sound Cavalier churchman, Sir Thomas Osborne, soon to become Earl of Danby. That in itself was a significant thing: it was a recognition that no minister could safely be employed who could not command the confidence of Parliament. But distrust was now so deeply rooted that even Danby had unceasing trouble with Parliament.

The third period of the reign was occupied by Danby's skilful attempt to re-establish the royal authority by building up once more what may be called the 'Church-and-King' party. The Dutch war was brought to an end (1674); and in order to show that the king's foreign policy was not unduly subservient to France, the Princess Mary, heir-presumptive to the Crown, was married to William of Orange, Louis' bitterest enemy (1677). Danby would have been glad to break free from France altogether. But Charles would not permit him to do so, and forced him in 1675 to sign a new secret treaty whereby he promised to preserve English neutrality in return for subsidies. With the fear of Parliament before his eyes, Danby noted on the treaty that he signed it only by the King's express command.

It was a sign of the importance of Parliament, and of the impossibility of carrying on government without its approval, that Danby should have found it necessary to organise a body of steady supporters in the House of Commons to vote for government measures. In doing so he may be described as the first party organiser, and the party which he organised was that to which the nickname of 'Tory' was soon to be applied. But he was not alone in doing this. On the other side the astute and subtle Shaftesbury was busy on the same task—creating an opposition party, whose members took counsel together as to the line they should follow in public affairs. This was the beginning of what was soon to be known as the 'Whig' party.

The ideas for which the two parties stood were made clearer by the very fact of their opposition. They became steadily more definite during the course of the fierce and exciting struggle that was soon to begin. Danby's party stood for Church and King, for the maintenance of authority as of divine ordinance, for the duty of obedience as the first duty of all good citizens; but their difficulty was that (as recent events had already shown, and future events were still more clearly to show) their twin loyalties, to Church and to King, could not always be reconciled. Shaftesbury's party on the whole stood for the supremacy of Law over all authority, including that of the king, and of Parliament as the maker of the law, and the direct mouthpiece of the nation. They paid no special veneration to the royal office as such; they tended to regard the king as only the first official of the nation. Some of them were, in private, republicans in principle, though they dared not say so openly. In religious matters they professed no desire to alter the position or

constitution of the Church; but they wished to keep it in subordination to the State, and they were in favour of toleration for the Dissenters. They were already beginning to develop a theory of government as the expression of their views, and John Locke, the friend of Shaftesbury, was to be the philosopher of limited or constitutional monarchy. But as yet they made no open profession of these doctrines. They were content to play upon the fear of Rome and the distrust of the Catholic Duke of York, which even Danby and his followers shared.

The growing opposition of the two parties broke into violent hostility in 1678, when a number of circumstances combined to raise the political temperature. In the first place the infamous Titus Oates turned up from the continent during the summer recess of Parliament with a story of a Jesuit plot to murder the king in order that the Duke of York might succeed to the throne. The duke had been an avowed Catholic for two years, and Oates charged his confessor with being a party to the plot. The story of the plot got abroad. It was eagerly believed by the heated imaginations of the time. The whole nation went mad; juries were prepared to hang the most innocent Catholics on the most flimsy evidence, and Oates was soon reinforced by other perjurers, ready to swear to anything. It was a cowardly panic, of which the nation had reason to be ashamed, and which responsible men should have done their best to allay. But when Parliament met, the temptation to Shaftesbury and his friends to make use of the Popish Plot in their attack on the Duke of York and the government was too strong to be resisted.

Another series of events helped to produce a storm. William of Orange had come over for his marriage in 1677, and there had been talk of an alliance between England and the Dutch. Danby was in favour of it; the king was not unwilling to let Louis XIV. see that he was not an absolute captive. Louis on his side resolved that Charles must be taught not to play fast-and-loose with his patron, and, to give him a fright, Louis let Shaftesbury and his friends know of the secret treaty of 1675.

Here was a magnificent ground of attack. These revelations, together with the universal excitement created by the stories of the Popish Plot, cut the ground from under Danby's feet. He was formally impeached. When he defended himself by stating that he had signed the French treaty by the king's express command, Parliament replied that this did

not exonerate him. That is to say, in certain circumstances it was the duty of a minister to disobey the express commands of the king! The State in which such a rule holds is anything but an absolute monarchy. Charles only saved Danby by first proroguing and then dissolving Parliament (January 1679). Thus ended, in furious opposition to the Crown, the Parliament which had been elected in a paroxysm of loyalty in 1661.

§ 4. *Violent Party Conflict*, 1679-81.

With the dissolution of the Long Parliament of the Restoration began the fourth period of the reign, nearly three years of furious party strife, during which the country seemed to be on the verge of civil war. The supreme subject of controversy was the Exclusion Bill, a proposal to exclude the Duke of York from the throne, which was the outcome of the excitement created by the stories of the Popish Plot. No less than three general elections (1679, 1680, 1681) were held during these three years, and the three Parliaments were so busy with controversy that they were only able to achieve one measure of permanent value —the *Habeas Corpus Act* of 1679, which prohibited delays in the issue of the ancient writ of *Habeas Corpus*, and thus strengthened the safeguards against imprisonment without trial which Magna Carta had begun and the Petition of Right had improved. But there was no new principle involved in the Act; and apart from it the record of these years is a record of barren strife, ending in a violent reaction which brought English political liberties for a time into grave peril. The main lesson of this period was that violent and overbearing partisanship on the part of a majority is in the end self-defeating. The opponents of the monarchy so alienated public opinion by their rancour that for a time they ruined themselves and the cause for which they fought.

It is needless to follow this fierce conflict in detail. But certain aspects of it deserve our attention. One of them was the attempt to find a new way of carrying on the government in concert with Parliament. The Parliament of 1679 insisted upon driving Danby out of power, and he was actually imprisoned in the Tower for five years. Then a new experiment was tried on the suggestion of Sir W. Temple. The secret Cabinet, or conclave of a group of ministers, was to be done away with; some men attributed to this method all sorts of evil results. The Privy

Council was to be made once more the active centre of government; but it was to be reduced in size, and composed of fifteen king's men and fifteen parliamentary leaders. This was at least an attempt to bring government into relation with Parliament. But it was a total failure. Government can only be carried on by a group of men who understand and trust one another, who have principles in common and the habit of acting together: that is the real justification for filling governments with men of the same political views. A body consisting of men violently hostile to one another could not possibly work.

The second feature of the struggle was the mischievous results which followed from the fact that all the attention of Parliament was concentrated upon one issue, so that it could spare no attention for any other. This was a period of great importance in foreign affairs: Louis XIV. was beginning his high-handed annexations of territory under legal forms which are known as the Reunions.[1] Even Charles II. was disturbed, and was ready to make an alliance with the Dutch, the Emperor and Spain to check these aggressions, provided that Parliament would give him enough money to free him from dependence upon Louis XIV. Had such an alliance been made, it is possible that the long wars which followed might have been avoided. But Parliament refused to vote a penny unless and until the king accepted the Exclusion Bill. It refused even to vote money for the defence of Tangier, which was hard-pressed and had to be evacuated in 1683.

Nothing was to be considered but the Exclusion Bill, which was introduced in each of the three Parliaments, and led in turn to the dissolution of each. No other means of dealing with the problem would even be considered. The Earl of Halifax, who was no friend of the Duke of York and was almost a republican in sentiment, but who knew that exclusion would probably mean civil war, advocated a policy of stringently limiting the royal authority during the tenure of the throne by a Roman Catholic. But Shaftesbury and his friends would have none of this. And when, in the Parliament of 1680, Halifax's eloquence persuaded the Lords to reject the Exclusion Bill, the Commons, wild with anger, demanded that he should be removed from the king's councils for ever. In 1681 Charles even offered to agree that, provided his brother were allowed to succeed to the royal title, all his powers should be exercised by a regent. That

[1] See above, Book v. chap. ii. p. 518.

device also was scouted: the majority in the Commons would have their own way in every detail. By this insistence they put themselves in the wrong in the eyes of moderate men.

They put themselves still further in the wrong by putting forward the Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles II., as their candidate for the succession. If James were to be excluded, the next heir in the right line would be his daughter Mary, the wife of William of Orange, who was a sound Protestant and the bitterest foe of Louis XIV. Why did Shaftesbury and his friends advocate a course which involved the exclusion of William of Orange? Partly because they did not want England to be ruled by a foreigner, and feared the subordination of English trade interests to those of the Dutch, and partly because they distrusted William as a friend of Danby; but their main reason was the hope that Monmouth, just because of the weakness of his title, would be the more easily controlled: 'the weaker the title, the better the king,' as one of their pamphleteers said. They wanted no more of inherited Divine Right. But in taking this line they undoubtedly outraged a great body of opinion. Monmouth's succession would inevitably have led to civil war. He was, it is true, popular with the crowds, for he was a good-looking young man. But the notion of the succession of a bastard outraged the belief, which was unquestionably held by a great part of the nation, that a sort of divine power passed from king to king by hereditary succession. That belief may seem unintelligible to us, but it was real, and it was one of the factors which impatient reformers had to take into account. It showed itself in a striking way in the all but universal belief that the king could cure certain diseases by touching the sufferers. All the Stewarts 'touched for the king's evil,' and it is significant that Queen Anne, the last in the direct line, was the last to follow the time-honoured practice. A sentiment so irrational but so deep was not to be lightly disregarded; it could not be disposed of by faked-up stories, which few believed, about Charles II.'s secret marriage to Monmouth's mother.

The Exclusionists put themselves still further in the wrong by the rancour and violence with which they pursued their cause, and especially by the use they made of the Popish Plot. The nation had for a time gone mad about the plot. But it came to its senses after a while, not without shame, and those who had hounded it on lost its confidence. The last victim to lose his life was an old and frail Catholic

peer, Lord Stafford. His sentence was due, not to an ordinary trial, but to an impeachment by the House of Commons of 1680, the most rancorous of all these Parliaments. His execution in December 1680 marked the end of the shameful fever, and Charles II. was shrewd enough to see that the tide was turning.

But the outstanding feature of the period was the fierceness of the controversy about exclusion, not only in Parliament, where such violence of language was used as to make all men feel that civil war was coming, but also at the repeated elections all over the country, and in the press. The Licensing Act[1] had expired in 1679; Parliament did not renew it, and this rendered possible an extraordinary outburst of pamphleteering. Only one of the products of the period is still read and still worth reading: Dryden's great satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*, the most brilliant of all English satires, which scarified Shaftesbury and his colleagues with venomous point. It was very widely read, and helped greatly to forward the reaction. It came at the end of the struggle; until then the most vigorous writing had been on the other side. In this feverish controversy the rival parties were sharply defined, and what is almost as important, they got names, labels that stuck. Fervid exclusionists tried to ruin their opponents by calling them Tories, after the Roman Catholic Irish outlaws and highway robbers. Royalists responded by nicknaming the exclusionists Whigs, after the bitter Covenanters of Scotland who were up in arms against all constituted authority in Church and State. These nicknames were to become names of pride. It is a queer thing that the names of the historic English political parties came respectively from Ireland and from Scotland.

But as soon as men began to recover from the wild fever of the Popish Plot, it was inevitable that their acrimonies should be sobered by the reflection that civil war was actually in sight. The last civil war was too recent and too well within men's memories for its lessons to be so soon forgotten; and as this nightmare became more vivid, and obscured the other and less real nightmare of the Popish Plot, many men who had been carried off their feet began to reflect that the maintenance of peace and order was the first of all national needs, and that for this purpose a strong government was essential. Hence the reaction towards a royalist view was rapid. It was not, indeed, reflected in Parliament; mainly

[1] See above, Chap. i. p. 498.

because four-fifths of the members of the House of Commons were elected by the boroughs, where Puritan sentiment was strongest. But it was none the less real. It affected moderate minds like Halifax, who called himself a 'Trimmer' between the frenzies on either side, but who was ready to support the king now, as the only safeguard against civil war. And Charles, knowing by instinct how the current of opinion was going, seized his chance, dissolved the Parliament of 1681, and summoned no other during the four years which remained of his life and reign.

In doing this he was deliberately flouting the Triennial Act, which provided that Parliament should meet every three years at least. But it shows the danger of extreme violence that this aroused little resentment: Parliament was beginning to be regarded as a dangerous body. Nor did public opinion very strongly object when Charles went on to take vengeance against the Whig leaders. Most of the more prominent among them took flight to Holland, including Shaftesbury (who died there) and Monmouth. A knot of the more desperate actually formed a plot (the Ryehouse Plot) to seize the king and the Duke of York. The real leaders of the party had no knowledge of these desperate devices, though they had undoubtedly held meetings at which they had discussed the possibility of resistance. But the plot was used as an excuse for the trial of some of the best of them for high treason, and Lord Russell, a son of the Earl of Bedford and a very honest man, and Algernon Sidney, an old Republican of the Cromwellian time, were both executed. They came to be regarded as the stainless martyrs of Whiggism; and a cause that can count martyrs is thereby ennobled and strengthened.

§ 5. *Triumphant Reaction and the Disregard of Laws*, 1681-88.

In the last years of his life Charles was indeed—thanks to the extravagant violence of his opponents—very nearly an absolute monarch, though he still had to depend upon Louis XIV. for funds, and dared not raise taxes by unparliamentary means. He was strong enough to make preparations for summoning a new Parliament that would be more amenable, by calling in the charters of most of the boroughs, which had returned the bulk of his opponents, and revising them in such a way as to ensure that his own partisans would control their government and the election of their represen-

tatives. This was a very high-handed, but also a very effectual, mode of dealing with parliamentary opposition at the roots. It was not completed in time for Charles himself to meet a doctored Parliament, for he died in 1685, having triumphantly avoided the necessity of going on his travels again, and having even undone much of the progress which Parliament had made during his reign. His success was due quite as much to the partisan violence of his opponents as to his own patience, resourcefulness, and astuteness. It is impossible not to admire the rogue.

His successor, James II., whose chance of succeeding to the unimpaired authority of the Crown had seemed five years earlier to be exceedingly remote, actually began his reign with a more secure and unchallenged power than any sovereign since James I. Parliament, successfully doctored by the revision of the charters, and still under the influence of the lessons of 1680 and 1681, was called immediately after his accession. It voted him for life a revenue of unparalleled magnitude, and showed itself in almost all ways amenable; yet even this Parliament refused to repeal the Test Act against Catholics when its Catholic sovereign asked it, and had to be dissolved after two sessions. Not only the general submissiveness of Parliament, but every other factor in the political situation seemed to be favourable to a restoration of royal absolutism. The Bishops and clergy of the Anglican Church had been more firmly convinced by the events of the last few years of the duty of Passive Obedience. They were preaching this doctrine to all their flocks; no ruler could have desired a more powerful support for his authority. Yet even the highest of High Church clergy owed allegiance to their Church as well as to the Crown. Again, James had in England a substantial regular army of some 16,000 men which had been gradually built up by Charles II.—the oldest of the still existing regiments belong to this date; and this force, a force such as none of his predecessors had ever possessed, ought to be able to overawe discontented subjects. Scotland was wholly cowed by long persecutions, and there was an army in Scotland too. Ireland might well be enthusiastic at the succession of a Roman Catholic sovereign, and Ireland also could supply an army. Moreover the most powerful monarch in the world, Louis XIV. of France, was the king's close ally, ready to support him in establishing his own power and in restoring Catholicism.

How complete was James' apparent mastery of the country was shown by the pitiful failure of two risings which the Whig exiles in Holland tried to stir up at the opening of the reign: one led by the Earl of Argyll in Scotland, the other by James' nephew, the Duke of Monmouth, in England. Argyll's attempt was wholly futile, and he was captured and executed (1685). Monmouth drew to his standard a number of peasants and yeomen in the west country when he landed at Torbay (1685). But he had not from the first the faintest chance of success, and was easily crushed at Sedgemoor. He himself was executed; that was the fortune of war. His unhappy followers were harried with a ruthless brutality to which there is happily no parallel in the modern history of England. The Bloody Assizes in which Judge Jeffreys wreaked vengeance on the rebels have left their mark in tradition. Apart from the brutal slaughter which followed Sedgemoor, more than 300 were put to death, and more than 800 were sent as slaves to the West Indies. Terror was to prevent any future risings.

Yet within four years of his accession, the king whose power seemed so firmly established was an exile and a fugitive, and the foundations of autocracy which he and his brother had striven to lay were swept away for ever. The cause of this was simply that with incredible folly James deliberately broke the alliance with the English Church and the Tory party upon which his power rested; convinced everybody beyond a shadow of doubt that both Protestantism and the political liberties of England were more gravely endangered than they had ever been since the Reformation; and thus gave a chance to the Whigs to redeem the opportunity which their own violence had lost in 1681.

Though the High Commission Court had been formally abolished in 1641, and its abolition had been confirmed in 1661, James revived it as a means of getting personal control over the Church. He appointed Roman Catholic officers to the army, in defiance of the Test Act, claiming that he had the right to dispense with any law in any particular case. He appointed Roman Catholics to the Privy Council. He actually filled the Deanery of Christ Church, Oxford, with an avowed Roman Catholic (1686), and deprived the fellows of Magdalen of their right of electing their own head, in order to force a Roman Catholic upon them (1687). That Oxford, the centre of High Church loyalism and of the doctrine of Passive Obedience, should be thus treated was a more terrible challenge to that doctrine than almost any

other that could be imagined. It struck horror into every country parsonage in England.

James was deliberately cutting away the main pillar on which his throne rested. The most devoted and thoroughgoing royalists in England were Rochester and Clarendon, the two Hydes, sons of the old Earl of Clarendon, and the king's own brothers-in-law. Both were prepared to go far in the direction of absolutism. James dismissed them both, the one from the Treasurership and the other from the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, because they would not become Roman Catholics. To govern Ireland James sent a Roman Catholic, Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnel. The appointment of a Roman Catholic Lord-Lieutenant might in itself have been a good thing. But Tyrconnel, a reckless loose-liver, was sent for the purpose not of doing justice to Irish Catholics, but of destroying Protestantism. He deliberately weeded out Protestants from the Irish army ; he remodelled all the corporations of the Irish boroughs so that the power was wholly in Catholic hands. Irish Protestants looked forward with trembling to what was coming. Englishmen dreaded what use was to be made of the Irish army.

In Scotland, again, where the royal authority was now perhaps more complete than in any other part of the islands, James pursued a similar policy. Complete toleration was granted to Roman Catholics ; Presbyterians were allowed only the most modest concessions. The towns were simply ordered to accept royal nominees to their offices. The Privy Council was filled with Roman Catholics, who held nearly all the most important offices of State.

A few years of this, and from Scotland and Ireland James might be able to hope to crush any resistance that might arise in England. Meanwhile, since he had declared war against the English Church, he had to look for support in England from some other quarter. The only and obvious quarter was the Protestant Dissenters, to whom Charles had also appealed in 1672. In 1687, disregarding the declared illegality of the Declaration of 1672, James issued a new Declaration of Indulgence far more sweeping in its terms than that of 1672. It not only granted complete freedom of worship, it announced that no tests would be required for admission to any office. If the Dissenters could be bribed, this ought to bribe them. In the hope that it would do so, James began to fill town councils with Dissenting members, in preparation for a new Parliament which was to repeal all the penal Acts. But to

his chagrin he found that even the Dissenters (though they sent a few addresses of thanks) were not to be counted upon to vote for the candidates he desired. The freedom of the nation was more to them than their own ; their desire for toleration was discounted by their dread of Popery. The king professed toleration now. But was not his ally Louis XIV. dragooning all Protestants out of France ? The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) could not have come at a more inopportune time for James, for England was full of Huguenot exiles bemoaning the cruelty of a Catholic king.

Disappointed with the result of the first Declaration, James issued a second in 1688, and ordered that it should be read on two consecutive Sundays in every church in the kingdom. This was to make the clergy the means of their own destruction. The Archbishop of Canterbury and six of his colleagues presented a petition in which they begged the king to withdraw the obnoxious order. It contained a phrase questioning the king's power to dispense with laws. On that ground the bishops were charged with having uttered a seditious libel, and committed to the Tower. The bishops were tried. The jury gave a verdict of Not Guilty. And the crowds of London cheered as at the news of a great victory : the Dissenters joined in the jubilation : even the soldiers whom the king had encamped on Hounslow Heath cheered as loudly as any when they heard the news. That ought to have made the king realise what a storm was preparing. The Declaration of Indulgence had proved the steadfastness of the Dissenters to the cause of Law : it had finally overstrained the capacity for loyalty of the Anglican clergy ; 'it hath brought all Protestants together,' said Halifax, 'and bound them up into a knot that cannot easily be untied.'

And while the trial of the seven bishops was proceeding, James was rejoicing because a son had at last been born to him. This meant that the nation might look forward to an indefinite continuance of the sort of policy James had pursued ; there was now no hope of relief by the succession of a Protestant sovereign. Men were so loth to believe the news that they invented the story that the infant was a changeling, brought into the queen's bed in a warming-pan. The birth of this ill-fated child made revolution inevitable.

On June 30th, the very day on which the crowds were celebrating the acquittal of the bishops, seven leading men met and signed a letter to William of Orange begging him

to come over with an adequate force to save the kingdom. Four of them were peers, among them Charles II.'s minister Danby; one of them was the Bishop of London; the other two were commoners of great Whig houses. The letter was taken by Admiral Herbert, disguised as a common sailor, and by him delivered to William III.

Violence had destroyed the formidable power whose establishment had been due to a reaction against violence.

[The best modern summary of the period is Lodge's *History of England from the Restoration to the Death of William III.*; see also Trevelyan's *England under the Stewarts*; Macaulay's *History of England* covers the reign of James II. in detail, but gives only one chapter to a survey of the reign of Charles II.; Hallam's *Constitutional History*; both Macaulay and Hallam are unduly biased in favour of the Whigs; Ranke's *History of England* gives a more detached view. See also Airy's *Restoration* (Epochs of Modern History) and his *Charles II.*; Christie's *Life of Shaftesbury*; Foxcroft's *Life of Halifax*; Burnet's *History of His Own Times*; Pepys' *Diary*. Lord Acton has a lecture on 'The Rise of the Whigs' in his *Lectures on Modern History*.]

CHAPTER V

THE REVOLUTION

(A.D. 1688-1692)

§ 1. *The European Situation and the Downfall of James II.*

The Revolution of 1688, which was begun by the invitation despatched to William of Orange, took place in England so quietly, and led to such important constitutional changes, that it is usual to concentrate attention upon these aspects of the great event. In reality the struggle for the establishment of the new régime lasted for four years, and the Revolution was always in danger during that period. The absence of fighting in England was largely a matter of luck. There was fighting in Scotland, and still more serious fighting in Ireland. There was naval fighting in the Narrow Seas, upon which the issue of the Revolution largely depended. And there was fighting on a vast scale upon the continent of Europe, the consequence of which was of the most vital importance for the islands; for if the course of events on the Continent had gone a little differently, the whole future of the islands and of the Commonwealth would have been altered. To get a sound view of the Revolution it is necessary to remember that it was a turning-point in European as well as in British history, and for that reason the events that led to its success must be regarded in the light of contemporary European history. William of Orange did not come to England merely in order to stop the unconstitutional actions of James II. He did not come even to win a crown for himself. He came because the fate of Europe depended upon how, and by whom, the fortunes of the islands were directed during these years; and by him the whole struggle of these four years was regarded mainly in the light of the European situation.

We must try to see it in that light too, and realise how intimately the fate of the islands was linked with that of Europe. For that reason we shall do well to survey the four years' struggle first, before we deal with the constitutional adjustments which were going on while it took place,

but which would have had no permanence had its result been different.

We have seen (Chapter III.) how dominant was the position of Louis XIV. in Europe during the years 1678-1688, and how insolently he had used his power. His aims were vaulting. He hoped to secure control over the whole or the greater part of the vast Spanish Empire, to which he had a claim by inheritance; the Spanish king was a fragile invalid, not expected to live long. Louis seems also to have hoped to secure for himself or his son the title of Emperor, which his strength would enable him to turn into a reality: armed with the imperial claims, he might have made himself master of divided Germany. Had these dreams been realised, he would have been master also of the world, more fully than ever Napoleon was. So menacing was his power, and so domineering and unscrupulous had he shown himself in action, that in 1686 the threatened States had formed a secret league, known as the League of Augsburg: it included the Emperor, Spain, the Dutch, Sweden, and the chief North German States, and in the next year it was joined by Bavaria, the princes of Italy and the Pope.

Formidable as this combination was on paper, it could have offered little resistance if Louis (who knew of its existence) had struck immediately, while the Emperor was in the throes of his struggle with the Turks, and James II. was securely seated on the British throne. But he delayed for two years, and in the meanwhile the Turkish power was broken, and the Emperor was relatively free; Belgrad was captured in June 1688. June 1688, the moment at which the invitation from England was sent to William of Orange, was indeed the critical moment in the European situation. The Prince-Bishop of Cologne, whose lands controlled the lower Rhine and threatened the Dutch, and who had been a close ally of Louis, died in that month; and in order to maintain his mastery on the lower Rhine Louis resolved to install by force his own candidate for the archbishopric against the nominee of the Emperor and the Pope. This was really the beginning of a great war, which lasted for ten years. In September of the same year, before William of Orange had set sail for England, Louis invaded Germany and captured the fortress of Philippsburg on the upper Rhine: it fell on October 29th —just before William set sail.

This was the situation which William of Orange had to

consider when the English invitation reached him. The opening moves had already taken place in a vast struggle for the mastery of Europe by Louis, or for its freedom. The Dutch provinces themselves were threatened by the French forces in Cologne. Was it safe for William, and would his Dutch subjects allow him, to choose this moment for embarking upon a very risky adventure, which might involve the use of the Dutch fleet and of a part of the Dutch army? William and the Dutch felt that the risk, great as it was, was worth taking for the purpose of detaching the British lands from the French alliance and transferring them to the other side. The decision turned out to be the right one. It altered the whole complexion of the war. But if the enterprise had not been attended by the most amazing good luck, it might have been an unqualified disaster for the European allies. That is what Louis XIV. hoped it would be.

When we reflect upon the supreme importance to Louis of being able to count upon the neutrality, if not the active help, of England and her fleet, it seems incredible that he should have allowed the invasion to take place without interference. Why was not Holland attacked? If it had been, William dared not have moved. Why did not the French fleet come out to resist the sailing of the expedition? Why were not French troops sent to help James? The main reason was that James had been showing a certain restiveness under Louis' yoke. In September, before starting his German campaign, Louis had warned the Dutch not to attack James II.; for William's preparations for an oversea expedition were notorious, and indeed could not be concealed. James had resented this, as a suggestion that he was not capable of defending himself; whereupon Louis had left him to his own resources. Louis calculated, indeed, that James would be quite strong enough, if not to defeat William at once, at any rate to tie him up in England, and to drain away troops from Holland; and as he felt that he could not fully trust James, who had actually talked of allying himself with Spain, the Dutch expedition seemed an admirable way of keeping him busy and at the same time getting William of Orange out of the way. In effect, Louis deliberately allowed the expedition to sail.

But if Louis did not stop the enterprise, why did not James, who was perfectly aware that it was being prepared? The English navy, in which James had always taken a keen interest, was stationed off the mouth of the Thames. It was not sent to watch the Dutch coast; though for an

anxious month a westerly wind—'a Papist wind,' William's friends called it—kept the ships of the expedition penned into Dutch harbours, and might have carried the English fleet across to the Dutch coast. When at last a 'Protestant wind' sprang up on November 1st, William was allowed to sail out undisturbed and to traverse the whole length of the English Channel unimpeded, till he reached his landing-place at Torbay in Devon.

Meanwhile James had been organising his forces for resistance. He had about 20,000 regular troops in England. He brought more than as many more from the armies of Scotland and Ireland, which had been built up in preparation for just such an event. His forces were far superior to the invaders, and they were posted to defend the approach to London. When William found, during the fortnight after his landing, that there was no such national uprising in his favour as he had been led to expect, the situation looked black indeed for him. Yet within a few weeks, without any fighting, William had occupied London and James was a fugitive and an exile. Resistance had simply collapsed. James' chief supporters deserted him, at first by ones and twos, later in droves — his own daughter Anne among them. Finally James himself lost his nerve and ran away. To the acute annoyance of William his flight was intercepted by some fishermen, and he had to return to London. But he obligingly ran away a second time, and thus solved every difficulty.

No such safe journey and no such easy victory could reasonably have been anticipated by William and his supporters when the expedition set sail. For the bloodlessness of the Revolution in England the chief credit belongs to the cowardice of James, and his sudden loss of nerve. He could certainly have made a stand if he had chosen. Or, if he had been willing to make concessions and to put himself in the hands of the High Tories, who were eager for compromise, he could have robbed William of the spoils of victory, or at least have made the invader's position intolerably difficult—especially as, in view of the European situation, William could not afford long delays. James' flight saved the situation, and played into William's hands. It is the greatest tribute to the magnanimity of Louis XIV. that he welcomed the ignominious fugitive without reproaches, and treated him and his son for long years as honoured guests.

The control of the new government over England was

absolutely unchallenged by any resistance from the moment of the king's flight. It found no difficulty in carrying out the elections of a new Parliament—called the 'Convention,' because it could not be summoned by royal writs in the regular way; and this Convention, which contained a Whig majority, was able to set about the discussion of vexed constitutional problems without disturbance. Yet the position was by no means secure. Even in England the number of devoted royalists was very large, and at almost any time during the next few years James could have regained the crown almost as easily as William had won it, if he would have consented to promise security for the English Church. From the first William was never popular, and had to go very warily: Englishmen did not like foreign rulers, and the Dutch had been enemies in three recent wars. So uncertain was the position felt to be that many of the leading English politicians, Whigs as well as Tories, including some of those upon whom William chiefly relied, were at pains to safeguard themselves by keeping in relations with the exiled king. If anything had gone seriously wrong with the war in Scotland and Ireland or on the Continent, or if Louis had been free and willing to throw his strength into the regaining of England, the Revolution might easily have been overthrown. Its fortunes depended upon how the struggle went elsewhere.

§ 2. *The War of the Revolution, in Scotland, in Ireland and on the Seas.*

William realised that the success of the Revolution depended upon the course of the war far more clearly than his English advisers, none of whom he fully trusted; and one of his first acts was to expel the French Ambassador and to commit England to the continental war. In May 1689 England became a member of the Grand Alliance. British troops and the English navy were engaged in the vast struggle, which was now a struggle for the security of the Revolution settlement as well as for the defeat of Louis XIV.'s aggressive aims.

During 1689, however, the main interest, for the islanders, lay not on the Continent but in Scotland and Ireland, where the supporters of the fallen king endeavoured to make head by force of arms. In Scotland the news of James' flight brought about a sudden and complete collapse of the whole structure of despotism which had been raised since 1660.

The Roman Catholic ministers fled. Everywhere the Presbyterians began to take the upper hand, and in the south-west, where the persecution had been bitterest, the unpopular clergy were 'rabbled' and driven from church, manse and glebe. In March 1689 a Scottish Convention met. It might have been tempted to repudiate the connexion with England, which had certainly brought few benefits hitherto; but it offered the crown to William and Mary, whose authority was fully accepted throughout the Lowlands. Only in the wild Highlands was there resistance to the new régime. There Graham of Claverhouse,[1] now Viscount Dundee, who had been famous as the hammer of the Covenanters, raised a Highland host to fight for the exiled king. He won a brilliant victory at Killiecrankie (July 1689) over a small force of Scottish regulars under General Mackay; but Dundee himself was killed—by a silver bullet, men said, since the Evil One protected him against lead—and when its leader was gone the host melted away.

It took two years more to pacify the Highlands. In 1691 an indemnity was offered to all who would take the oath before the end of the year, and every chief save one did so. The one was the hapless Macdonald of Glencoe, who had put off submission till the last moment from motives of pride, but actually took the oath on January 7th. On the advice of the ablest of his Scottish ministers, the Master of Stair, William III. decided to make an example of the delinquent, as a lesson to the Highlands for the future. The hideous and cold-blooded massacre of Glencoe (February 1, 1692) was the result. Though it seems clear that he did not know Macdonald had actually taken the oath, William III. cannot be exonerated from the guilt of this ugly crime. Terrorism always brings its own punishment in the long run; and the long-lasting opposition of the Highlands to the new régime, which caused so much trouble during the eighteenth century, was certainly stimulated by the Massacre of Glencoe. Nevertheless Scotland was quiet; the Lowlands were actively loyal, the Highlands at any rate submissive, and no further danger was to be feared from this quarter.

Far more serious was the trouble in Ireland, where fierce fighting went on for three years. In Ireland the whole organisation of government, under the Lord-Lieutenant Tyrconnel, was arrayed on James' side, and the preparations which had been made in the steady Romanising of the army and the administration had their effects. Tyrconnel's army

[1] There is a life of Graham of Claverhouse, by C. S. Terry.

had, however, been weakened by the forces sent across to England to resist William; and the consequence was that the Protestants of the north were able to organise themselves, especially in Londonderry and Enniskillen, during the autumn of 1688. Everywhere else in Ireland the cause of James was triumphant; and when, two months after his arrival in France, he crossed over to Ireland (March 1689), bringing with him some 1200 troops, he found an almost united nation ready to greet him, and a Parliament, almost wholly composed of Catholics, ready to carry out a revolution. James regarded Ireland merely as a stepping-stone to England. Tyrconnel and many of his followers cared primarily for establishing Irish independence, and this introduced difficulties from the first.

But on the necessity of reducing the resistance of the Protestants in the north all were agreed, and during the spring of 1689 Londonderry was strictly besieged. If it fell, Enniskillen must also fall. It was so ill provided that its governor, Lundy, was for surrendering. But the inhabitants insisted upon resisting, and did so with the utmost gallantry for fifteen weeks. They were all but exhausted when a relieving force from England arrived at the end of July and forced the Catholics to raise the siege. Three days later the garrison of Enniskillen won a brilliant victory at Newtown Butler, which secured the Protestant control of Ulster. A little later an army under William of Orange's friend, the French Huguenot Schomberg, landed at Belfast to undertake the reconquest of Ireland, but was able to do little in face of James' superior forces, except to establish a hold over Ulster. Yet the recovery of Ireland was indispensable for the safety of the Revolution in England and Scotland: indispensable also, therefore, for success in the continental war against Louis. For that reason William of Orange, eager as he was to take part in the continental war, determined himself to lead the main army in the next year. Had Louis realised as clearly as William the importance of the Irish campaign, he would have sent across large forces, and the issue of the war might have been different.

Louis might have sent what forces he liked in this year; for at this critical moment the English navy failed in its duty. It had been strangely idle, and had fallen into bad organisation and indiscipline. On the other hand, the French fleet, to whose creation Colbert had devoted so much pains, was at its strongest. In July 1690 it sallied

forth under the command of Admiral Tourville, found the combined English and Dutch fleets off Beachy Head, and inflicted upon them the most complete defeat yet recorded in British naval annals; only the stubborn valour of the Dutch saved the allies from an irremediable disaster. The victory gave to the French command of the English Channel. In England there was panic at the thought that a French invasion by an army which lay ready at Dunkirk might be effected while the king and the best available troops were in Ireland—a panic all the greater because the allies had just suffered a severe defeat at Fleurus in Flanders. The summer of 1690 was an anxious moment for the friends of the Revolution. But the French made no use of their naval success. It was in any case too late to stop William's expedition to Ireland, which had landed safely in June; but the French fleet did not even attempt to cut his communications.

To the Irish Protestants, who had been living in dread of they knew not what, and in the certainty of a confiscation of all their property if James were victorious, William of Orange came as a deliverer; and the battle of the Boyne, in which on July 1st, 1690, he broke the Irish army, was henceforth, for them, the greatest of events, to be annually commemorated by those who took pride to call themselves Orangemen. Yet it was by no means a decisive victory: in effect it gave to William only Dublin and the province of Leinster. An able leader on the Irish side could still have restored the position, especially as all the ports of the south and west were open for French reinforcements. James II. gave it up for lost, and ran away, back to France, in the moment of crisis, as he had run away from England.

But though they were deserted by their king and soon afterwards by the French troops, the Irish still put up a good fight in Munster and Connaught, a better fight now than in the time of their success. Their chief centre of resistance was Limerick, where the gallant Patrick Sarsfield held out with admirable courage, even capturing William's siege guns when he advanced to besiege the city; and the siege had to be raised. When the campaign of 1690 ended, the west, with Limerick and Galway, had still to be conquered.

Louis now recognised the great importance, for his own purposes, of keeping the struggle alive in Ireland; and having still command of the sea, in 1691 he sent across a new French army under experienced generals to defend the west. Against

them William despatched a well-equipped force under the Dutch general Ginkel, who captured Athlone (the key to Connaught), and in the hard-fought battle of Aghrim broke the Franco-Irish force. Galway and Connaught fell into his hands as a result of this victory, and only Limerick remained. As successful resistance was held to be impossible, Sarsfield surrendered on very favourable terms, just a fortnight before the arrival of French reinforcements. He and many of his followers were left free to go abroad and serve against England in the Continental wars. But he had (as he supposed) secured by the terms of his surrender that Irish Catholics should at least be allowed the same freedom of worship which they had enjoyed under Charles II. The shameful breach of this formal agreement will have to be recorded in another place, when we examine the Revolution settlement in Ireland.

By the end of 1691 all the islands had thus been brought into obedience, and no supporters of James remained in arms. But so long as the seas were commanded by the French, new disturbances in Ireland or the Highlands of Scotland were always to be feared; nor could the islands freely play their part in the great continental struggle. To win this final assurance for the Revolution, and to give a death-blow to James' hopes, was the task of the navy, which had now been strengthened and reorganised and was under the command of Edward Russell, of the great Whig house of Bedford.

Whig as he was—he had actually been one of the signatories to the invitation to William—Russell was secretly intriguing with the exiled court at St. Germains. For 1692 James had planned an invasion of England, and Louis had promised that the French fleet should clear the Channel and transport a French army, with the exiled king, to form a nucleus for an English revolt. An elaborate manifesto was drafted, and James went down to the coast of Normandy to be ready for embarkation. Russell had under his command a combined English and Dutch fleet watching for the French to sail. Had he played the traitor, as at one time he seems to have meant to do, the worst might have happened. But when the French fleet came out, the pride of the navy got the upper hand with him. He fought like a Trojan, and in the great battle of La Hogue the proud French fleet which had for a time controlled the seas was shattered in a hard fight and had to flee. Twelve of its best ships were burnt by Sir George Rooke in the very harbour of La

Hogue and under the very eyes of the unhappy James, whose hopes vanished in the smoke of the burning.

The battle of La Hogue finally ensured the triumph of the Revolution. More than that, it gave to the English and their Dutch allies complete command of the seas in the long wars that were to follow, and enabled them to do infinite damage to French foreign trade, and to transport British troops in safety to the continental fields of fighting. Once more, the navy had determined the issue.

[General works on the Revolution period will be noted at the end of the next chapter. Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power on History* is important for the naval struggle; for military events, Fortescue's *History of the British Army*.]

CHAPTER VI

THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT

(A.D. 1689-1707)

§ 1. *The General Character of the Settlement.*

LIKE the settlement at the Restoration, the settlement which followed the Revolution was separately dealt with in England and Wales, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in the colonies, and there was no attempt to work out a coherent plan for the relations of the Commonwealth as a whole. But England was very clearly the predominant partner in the loose confederacy of States, and in various ways her decisions affected all the rest, partly by imitation, and partly because (at all events in the cases of Ireland and the colonies) the English Parliament did not hesitate to legislate for what it regarded as dependent States. It was, in fact, the form which the settlement took in England which mainly determined the character of the political development of the whole Commonwealth for a very long time to come. For the Revolution in England established a constitutional system which became the model not only for the rest of the Commonwealth but for a great part of the world.

This new system was not due to the wisdom of any single man; and it would be the greatest of blunders to attribute it to William III.[1] The personal character and ideas of the king counted for very little in the settlement in any of the British realms. Great man as he was, his chief interest was in the struggle against Louis XIV.; so long as the islands were brought on to the right side in that struggle, and so long as he was given the power to direct their foreign policy and to use their military resources, he was content that the problems of government should be settled as the nations themselves desired. He was a reticent and self-centred man. He never understood his British subjects, or cared very much about the questions in which they were chiefly interested. He never fully trusted any of the leading Englishmen with

[1] There is a short life of William III. by H. D. Traill in the Twelve English Statesmen Series.

whom he had to work, or any Scotsman, except William Carstairs, who was his confidential adviser on Scottish affairs; his only real confidants were Dutch nobles whom he brought over with him, especially Bentinck, who became Earl of Portland, and Keppel, whom he made Earl of Albemarle; and the favour shown to these foreigners was deeply resented. His queen, as an Englishwoman, was more popular; all William's worst troubles came after her death in 1694. But his most important contribution to the settlement was that by refusing to take the position of being merely the queen's husband, and stating that if he were not offered the crown he would return to Holland, he put a stop to arguments about the hereditary succession, and made it inevitable that Parliament should simply assume the power of disposing of the crown. Apart from this, he made no personal contribution to the settlement. He merely accepted it.

§ 2. *Tories and Whigs: rival Conceptions of Government.*

The outstanding feature of the situation in England was that as the Revolution was not the result of war, but had in fact been shared in by Whigs and Tories, Anglicans and Dissenters, the settlement was not imposed by force in accordance with the views of any one party, but was the result of discussion and compromise. And this was what made its results so lasting, in spite of their manifest imperfection: it was founded upon 'consent.' A system of government arrived at by peaceful agreement after discussion was a new thing in the history of the world, and the agreement was all the more remarkable because it was made between men who had sharply conflicting theories about government.

The Tories still clung to the idea that monarchy was of divine ordinance, and that the strength of the State must depend upon the existence of a strong sovereign power, supported by the belief and the habitual obedience of the people. They still clung, also, to the idea that uniformity in religion was essential to the health of the State. They could not bring themselves to accept any settlement which would weaken the idea of hereditary succession, or do anything to encourage the notion that violent resistance to authority was not one of the greatest of crimes. Their views were almost certainly the views of the great mass of Englishmen at that date; for the dread of the evils that might follow from

any light-hearted repudiation of established authority had been driven into men's minds not only by the civil wars through which their fathers had lived, but by corresponding troubles in other countries. The Tories were right in the stress which they laid upon the value of the sentiment of loyalty and the habit of obedience in holding the State together; they were right in feeling that the dislocation of all order which is apt to result from any loosening of the foundations of confidence in the power that holds the State together may bring the most appalling evils in its train.

The most cogent exposition of the Tory view that a very strong central power is necessary for the well-being of the State is to be found in *Leviathan*, by Thomas Hobbes, which was published in 1651, when the civil wars had shown how easily a settled order might lapse into anarchy. Hobbes argued that if society is to be held together, there must be in it a central power with unlimited authority. Civilisation, he believed, depended upon the existence of such a power. In his view, when men became members of an organised society or State, they must be regarded as having made a contract with one another to set up a government over them as a means of escaping from the state of nature, in which every man was free to knock his neighbour on the head, and human life was 'nasty, brutish and short'; once men began to revolt against the authority they had set up, they broke their contract with one another, and anarchy followed. Hobbes' argument, as he recognised, did not exclude the possibility of this absolute sovereign power being wielded by a Parliament; but he doubted whether it could be effectively exercised by a wrangling and divided body. But Hobbes was distrusted by most Tories as a free thinker; he made very little of the mystical and religious side of monarchy. The ordinary Tory view was better expressed in Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, in which he tried to prove that hereditary monarchy was God's chosen device for the government of the world, and endeavoured to establish his case by a multitude of scriptural examples.

The Whigs, on the other hand, had no exaggerated respect for monarchy as such. Many of them were republicans in theory; and though they admitted that the traditional veneration for kings made it desirable to retain monarchy as an institution, they thought of a king only as the first official of the nation, liable to be replaced if he was false to his duties. They believed that the ultimate deciding voice ought to lie with the nation as a whole, or with the politically

active part of the nation, speaking through its representatives in Parliament. They believed quite genuinely in liberty, by which they meant the right of every man to order his life as he thought best, so long as he did not hurt his neighbours. And they believed that the supreme guarantee of liberty was to be found in a fixed system of Law, not capable of being disregarded or altered by any arbitrary decision of any power whatsoever, save only the nation speaking through its representatives in Parliament. Liberty resting on and protected by Law: that is the heart of the Whig doctrine, and the best part of it. And because they held that the laws ought to be generally understood and universally accepted, the Whigs did not believe in frequent or detailed alteration of the laws; they would make only the minimum changes necessary.

But perhaps the most distinctive part of the Whigs' creed was the strength of their belief in Property as an institution; which went so far that the defence of property seemed to them to be the main purpose of law. The acquisition of property was in their view one of the main distinctions between man and the beasts; they held that civilisation had mainly arisen out of the endeavours of men to acquire property, and that therefore the best state is that in which property is best protected. And because taxation is essentially a seizing of part of every man's property by the State, they held that all taxation must be approved by Parliament, because no man's property ought to be taken from him without the consent of his representatives. Thus the essentially Whig doctrine of 'no taxation without representation' was a sort of corollary from the doctrine of the sanctity of property. In religious matters the Whigs strongly believed in freedom of belief and of worship. Many of them were, in fact, free-thinkers, or (in the language of the day) Latitudinarians. But they believed in the necessity of a national Church, to which they were ready to allow large privileges; they held, however, that because of its influence over men's thought and actions it must be closely controlled by the State—by Parliament, not by the Crown.

The Whigs were right in the value they attached to the will of the nation as a whole, and to the importance of giving it a mode of expression and the deciding voice in all great matters of public policy. They were right in the stress they laid upon 'civil and religious liberty,' and in their view that liberty is essentially dependent upon law. They were right

in seeing the vital importance of an effective public control over taxation, though the grounds upon which they based the principle were questionable. It is easy to see the limitations of their political theory; but it was on the whole the sanest and the most enlightened that had yet been adopted by a large and powerful body of men in any State, and it made for progress and the increase of human liberty.

The most effective exposition of the Whig creed is to be found in the *Essay on Government* by John Locke, which was published in 1689, and became almost the Bible of Whiggism. Like Hobbes, Locke assumed that the people in a State must be regarded as bound together by an implicit 'contract.' But he argued that besides the contract whereby the people agree to organise a State and set up a government, a second contract must be assumed to have been made between the people and their government; and this contract might be broken by misconduct on the part of the government, and justify the setting up of a new form of government. All this talk about 'social contracts' has a certain unreality for us, because we know that historically no such agreements ever took place, and that the State has in fact grown, not been formally manufactured. But the various arguments based upon the idea of a contract had such profound influence upon men's minds, both at the time of the British Revolution and for more than a century afterwards, that we should be disregarding a vitally important element in the building up of political liberty if we did not keep it in mind.

Between men holding such different views, compromise was not easy. Even on the question of the offer of the crown to William and Mary there were long and difficult discussions. The Tories did not want to suggest that Parliament or the people had the power to depose a king, or to admit that the line of succession had been deliberately broken. The Whigs would have liked formally to declare that James had been deposed for breaking the laws. That was, in fact, what had happened; and the unhappy Tories could not get over it—they had helped to bring it about. But a verbal compromise partly saved the situation: it was voted that James had abdicated the throne by his flight, and that it was therefore vacant; and William and Mary were invited to occupy it. In actual fact, though it was wrapped up in careful words, a king had been dethroned and a new king had been elected. That is the bottom fact of the Revolution, and there was no getting away from it.

§ 3. *The Constitutional Settlement in England.*

The new settlement of the system of government was carried out in a series of Acts, the most important of which was the Bill of Rights (1689), based upon an earlier Declaration of Rights, the drafting of which had been one of the first tasks of the Convention. But even this great document did not lay down any general principles, or try to define a new system of government. It was content to set forth the abuses of which James II. had been guilty, and to declare them illegal. The most important of these clauses were those which declared illegal the power of suspending laws (as by the Declaration of Indulgence), the maintenance of a standing army within the kingdom without the consent of Parliament, and all interference with the free election of members of Parliament, or with freedom of speech and debate in Parliament.

But a general declaration of the illegality of various kinds of action is of little avail unless the means of preventing them in future are effective. Parliament found the means not only of preventing future illegalities, but of establishing its own supremacy, in its control over finance. It voted a fixed grant to the Crown for the 'Civil List,' that is, for the ordinary expenses of civil government. But this money was only to be spent for the purposes for which it was allotted, and by assigning particular taxes to particular purposes Parliament ensured that this was done. The Crown had henceforth no large general revenue of which it could dispose as it thought fit. And this applied especially to the money for the upkeep of armies, over which Parliament kept a very jealous watch, voting it only from year to year. As the military needs of the State under William III. were very great, this meant that Parliament had to be summoned every year, and that no policy could be pursued of which it disapproved. A further device for the same end was found in the enactment of a Mutiny Act for the period of only one year. If the discipline of the army was to be maintained, Parliament must be asked to renew this Act every year. These measures (which seem so modest in themselves) were so effective that from 1689 to this day the government of England has always been dependent upon the will of Parliament.

The changes thought necessary in the political system were subsequently completed by the enactment of a Triennial Act (1694). This did not replace the Triennial Act of 1664,

which had provided that Parliament should meet at least once in three years, but had placed no limitation upon the time for which a given Parliament should sit. Financial needs and the Mutiny Act ensured that henceforth Parliament must meet not merely once in three years, but every year. The purpose of the new Triennial Act was to ensure that there should be no more long parliaments, but that a general election should take place every three years, so as to ensure that Parliament kept in touch with the constituencies.

What must strike the student about these provisions is their extraordinary modesty. There was no elaborate drawing up of a brand new constitution, with sweeping assertions of political principles. The minimum changes were made, and in form they were very slight. But they were sufficient for their purpose: they established the supremacy of Parliament.

In religious matters the changes were equally slight. There was some talk (as there had been at the Restoration) of a measure of comprehension to bring back the Dissenters into the national Church. But the gulf was now too wide; and the High Churchmen, whom it was important to reconcile, would have made great difficulties. As it was, a considerable number of them, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the saintly Bishop Ken, and some hundreds of parish clergy, could not reconcile it with their consciences to take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereigns, and left their livings. They were known as the Non-jurors. Very many even of those who took the oath were determinedly hostile to the new régime; and, lest these men should be driven into open enmity, little was done for the Dissenters. A Toleration Act was passed (1689), which allowed freedom of worship to all persons who accepted the doctrine of the Trinity, provided they took, if required by a magistrate, an oath of allegiance to the king and queen and denied that any 'foreign prince or prelate' had jurisdiction within the realm. This in theory excluded the Roman Catholics, but in practice they were not interfered with: if they behaved themselves, the oaths were not tendered to them. But neither the Corporation Act nor the Test Act was repealed, and these in theory excluded Dissenters, as well as Roman Catholics, from all civil and military offices, since they required office-holders to take the Anglican sacrament. In practice, however, these prohibitions were largely disregarded. Many Dissenters took

the sacrament merely to qualify for office; and from 1727 onwards an Act of Indemnity was annually passed for those who had failed to observe the provisions of these Acts. It was but a lame and halting toleration that was thus granted, much less than James II. had offered in his Declaration of Indulgence. But it was effective, and it rested on 'consent.' Even the High Churchmen accepted toleration, though they did not like it. They liked still less the habitual evasion of the Test Act, as they showed when, getting the upper hand during Queen Anne's reign, they repeatedly proposed, and eventually passed, an act to prevent occasional conformity.

Yet another change, if possible even more momentous, was carried out not by enactment but simply by the omission to enact. The Licensing Act[1] was not renewed, even in a modified form; and the result was that the censorship of the press disappeared altogether. There is nothing more essential to political liberty than a free press, and nothing more certain to create in a nation an active interest in political problems. The Revolution saw a revival of that eager and unflagging discussion of public questions in pamphlets and newspapers which had existed for a time under the Puritan republic, and for another interval during the heated discussions on the Exclusion Bill. It was never to die down again. Henceforward political action was to be influenced, and the mind of the nation was to be formed, almost as much by writers outside of Parliament as by speeches within its walls. And in this regard England and the other members of the British Commonwealth were a century and more ahead of nearly all the great States of Europe.

The constitutional changes which were carried out in 1689 and the following years received a tardy extension in the Act of Settlement (1701), which was passed primarily to determine the order of succession after Queen Anne and to fix it upon the Hanoverian line, the descendants of James I.'s daughter Elizabeth; but the occasion was also used to establish certain other principles which form a sort of appendix to the main Revolution settlement. It is worth noting that the Act of Settlement was passed by a Tory Parliament which was strongly opposed to William III. Many of its provisions were scarcely veiled attacks upon the king, such as the clause which provided that future kings should not leave the country without the permission of Par-

[1] See above, Chap. i. p. 498.

liament. But it was a new thing to find the Tories striving to limit royal power.

Two clauses of the Act of Settlement especially deserve to be noted. One provided that henceforth the judges should hold their positions for life, unless removed after an address by both Houses of Parliament. This secured the independence of the judicial bench, and prohibited the practice of dismissing judges who gave decisions distasteful to the Crown, which had been common under the Stewarts. It was a reform of vital importance. The other clause was aimed at preventing the extension of royal influence over the House of Commons by the appointment of members of Parliament to profitable offices. It simply provided that after the death of Queen Anne holders of offices under the Crown should be incompetent to sit in Parliament. If this clause had become effective, it would have prevented the presence of ministers in Parliament and would in the long run have greatly reduced the power of Parliament. But it was repealed in 1707, before the Act of Settlement came into effect; and the Place Act of 1707 has been of very great importance in the development of the British system of government. It provided that all persons appointed to offices should vacate their seats.[1] But holders of offices created before 1705 were permitted to be re-elected without giving up their offices; holders of offices created after 1705 were not to be members of Parliament at all. Thus a rough distinction was drawn between the offices which might and those which might not be held by members of Parliament. And this was the first step towards our modern practice, under which the heads of the great departments of State are always members of Parliament and subject to its criticism, while minor officials are excluded from Parliament.

§ 4. *The Relations between Government and Parliament.*

The clause against placemen in the Act of Settlement shows that the legislators of the Revolution had not conceived anything like the modern system of cabinet government, the essence of which is that the chief ministers are members of Parliament and responsible to it. That system

[1] Incidentally this Act for the first time made it possible for a member of Parliament to resign his seat! This had earlier been illegal. Now a member could apply for an office of profit under the Crown, and so vacate his seat. That is why members who wish to resign have to apply for the office of Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds (or a similar post), which, of course, they give up as soon as it has served its purpose.

was made possible by the Act of 1707. But it grew up slowly and by custom ; it was never created by law. It is characteristic of British institutions that they grow and change by the half-unconscious operation of custom ; and the unwritten part of the system is far more important than the written part. What has already been said about the Revolution settlement illustrates this : the legal changes which it made were very slight in form ; but the real changes were of immense importance. They amounted to no less than the establishment of the sovereignty of Parliament, though not a word to this effect appears in any of the Acts.

One great change was already gradually coming about in William III.'s reign. Because it was essential that the government should be on good terms with Parliament, and because Parliament was now divided into clearly marked parties, the king—though nominally free to choose any ministers he liked—was in practice being compelled by force of circumstances to choose his ministers from the party that commanded a majority in the House of Commons. William III. started, quite naturally, by trying to bring the best men of both parties into his government. But he found that this did not work well, because it meant that his ministers could not co-operate easily. As his first two Parliaments had a Whig majority, he found it necessary to replace his Tory ministers by Whigs ; and by 1696 the chief ministers were so exclusively Whig that they were known as ' the Whig junto.' But when the Tories got a majority, as they did in 1698 and the following years, and when therefore Parliament began to spend its time in vicious attacks upon the Whig ministers, William found it necessary to replace Whigs by Tories. More and more, governments were inevitably coming to reflect the character and opinions of the House of Commons for the time being ; a faint anticipation of the future party-cabinet system was beginning to emerge, though it was yet far from complete.

This does not mean that the group of ministers formed a responsible government, always acting together, like those to which we are accustomed, though the tendency was in that direction. Nor does it mean that the king had ceased to be the deciding factor. The case was very much the reverse under William III. In the sphere of foreign policy especially he acted quite independently, and commonly did not even consult his ministers, not to speak of Parliament. A striking demonstration of this was afforded when, after

negotiating with France the First Partition Treaty for the division of the Spanish dominions, he simply informed his ministers in outline of what he had done, and required them to send a blank commission duly sealed with the Great Seal authorising unknown persons to sign an unknown treaty. For agreeing to this Somers, the greatest of the Whig leaders, and two of his colleagues, were impeached by the Tory Parliament in 1701. Over foreign policy, at any rate, Parliament had not yet obtained any effective control, except through its power of refusing funds for a policy of which it disapproved; and this was not enough, since the honour of the country might easily be committed by a treaty which would never have been signed had its terms been discussed beforehand.

The powers of the Crown under the Revolution settlement were thus still very great. And William III., though he accepted loyally enough the formal limitations imposed upon him, chafed sorely under the restrictions upon his authority. More than once, especially when the Tories viciously attacked his Dutch friends in 1698 and 1699, he threatened to leave the country and go back to Holland. And he would have done so if he had not been able to play a free hand in foreign affairs, of which he had a thorough knowledge, and of which practically none of the English politicians, whether Whigs or Tories, had any real grasp. He was a lonely soul, never popular in England, especially after the death of his wife; he was distrusted as a Dutchman and a foreigner, and half the provisions of the Act of Settlement were covert sneers at him and his policy. He was never fully happy except in Holland; he never gave his full confidence to any Englishman; and, great man as he was, perhaps this lack of sympathy with his new subjects was among his chief contributions to English liberty, since it kept Tories even more than Whigs perpetually watchful to resent and prevent any enlargement of the royal power.

§ 5. *The Revolution Settlement in Scotland and its Effects upon Anglo-Scottish Relations.*

In the struggle against Charles I. Scotland had played at first the most active part; and it is possible that but for her action the system of Charles and Strafford might have triumphed. In the struggle against James II. Scotland took no direct part, because she was cowed by the despotic system established since 1660, and by the fierce persecution which

it carried out. But the moment the news of James' flight arrived, the whole system collapsed; and while the Edinburgh mob sacked the chapel at Holyrood, and the peasants of the south-west 'rabbled' the Episcopal clergy, an assembly of nobles and gentry invited William to assume the government, and a 'Convention' was summoned, which met in March 1689.

This Convention has been described as the most important legislative assembly in Scottish history. Its 'Jacobite' members soon found themselves helpless, and many of them went home. Then a 'Claim of Right' was drawn up, corresponding to the English Declaration of Rights, which condemned the acts of James as illegal, and without any of the evasions of the English Convention declared that he had forfeited the crown, and offered it to William and Mary. The Convention also condemned Episcopacy and—most notable change of all—the practice of appointing Lords of the Articles to draw up parliamentary business, by means of which all the Stewart kings had turned Parliament into their implement. It was practically on condition of his accepting this new system that the Crown was offered to William III.

In a later session the Convention (now turned into a regular Parliament) began an active political life, such as had never before been known in the history of the Scottish Parliament, criticising government with freedom. National self-government was becoming for the first time a reality in Scotland. The main subject of discussion was the reorganisation of the Church, which was at last settled by an Act of 1690, re-establishing the full Presbyterian order.

Thus Scotland was endowed not only with a democratically governed Church, such as she had been allowed to enjoy for only brief intervals before, but also, and for the first time, with a free and independent Parliament, to which government had to pay continuous deference and attention, and which showed itself capable (as in the discussion on the Massacre of Glencoe) of showing as bold and independent a front as the English Parliament.

But this development had one aspect which might lead to important results. So long as the Scottish Parliament was under the absolute control of the English king, as it had been since 1660, there was no danger that Scottish policy would come into conflict with English policy. But the danger became real when Scotland became an effectively independent realm, capable of following a policy of its own. And this

danger was not long in showing itself. It became so serious as to threaten the bond which had for so long united the two sister nations.

What brought the danger to its height was trade rivalry. And this is important, because questions of trade privileges were in fact to be always the most dangerous to the fellowship of the peoples within the British Commonwealth. As a separate kingdom, with its own trade laws, Scotland was treated by the English Parliament as if she was a foreign State. She had never enjoyed since the Restoration the freedom of trade in England which had been the chief compensation for the forced union under the Puritan republic; and she was excluded also from trade with the colonies, and from the benefits of the Navigation Acts. But Scotland, like other nations, was eager to have a share in the rich traffic of the South Seas; she looked to this traffic to relieve her poverty. In 1695 a Scottish company, to which a good deal of English capital was subscribed, was formed to trade with the tropics. At first it turned its attention to the East Indies; but the jealousy aroused among the friends of the English East India Company was so great that this had to be abandoned. Then a scheme was formed for establishing a Scottish colony at Darien, on the Isthmus of Panama. Scanty Scottish savings were lavishly invested, and two parties of settlers were sent out in 1698. They were (as might have been foreseen) attacked by a Spanish force and overwhelmed. The colony was a failure, and all the money invested in it was lost. And it was made a bitter grievance that no support of any kind was given by William, Scotland's elected king.

The Darien Expedition was ill-conceived, and doomed to failure from the first: the Isthmus of Panama was the very centre of the Spanish empire, and it was unthinkable that Spain would allow any settlement to be planted there. Moreover the expedition came at the most unfortunate moment, when it was highly important that Spain (which had been a member of the Grand Alliance in the last war) should be most considerately dealt with, in view of the necessity of deciding the future of the Spanish dominions, which the powers were then discussing. Nothing could have been more embarrassing to the king than this expedition, which he had no means of controlling, and which was at the very least a gross breach of international courtesy. It provided a striking illustration of the danger and inconvenience that was always liable to arise when two countries, linked to-

gether under the same crown, were free to pursue inconsistent policies.

On the other hand, to the Scots it inevitably appeared that their eager attempt to get a share of the wealth arising from tropical trade had been baffled by the greed of the partner nation which was already drawing great profits from that trade. The link with England seemed to present only drawbacks and no advantages; and, looking back over the century, it might plausibly be argued that half the evils from which Scotland had suffered had been due to the fact that the Scottish king was also king of England, and could use English resources to the detriment of the smaller realm. In fact, the existing connexion could not remain unaltered.

§ 6. *The Union of England and Scotland.*

William III. deserves the credit of having fully recognised that a radical readjustment of the relations between the two countries had now become necessary in the interests of both. In his first message to the Scottish Convention he had commended the idea of a union with England; in his last message to the English Parliament he urged it to take steps to bring a union about. At the end of William's reign, indeed, the question had become urgent. Scotland, like England, had at the Revolution fixed the line of succession first on William and Mary jointly, then on their children, then on the Princess Anne and her children (Anne had married Prince George of Denmark), and then on William's children should he marry a second time. But William and Mary had no children; William had not married again; and all Anne's children had died in infancy. It had therefore become necessary to decide who should succeed Anne, and the English Act of Settlement (1701), fixing the succession on the Hanoverian line, had been passed. But the Scots had adopted no corresponding Act. They were free to make a quite different settlement. They might even bring back the exiled Stewarts. In their restive state of mind, they might take some irremediable step. It was urgently necessary that this danger should be dealt with.

Accordingly, in 1702, the English government and Parliament decided to treat for a union as the most satisfactory solution of the question; and commissioners were appointed from both sides. But in Scotland there were two elements hostile to the idea of union. One consisted of the Jacobites, who wanted to restore the Stewarts, the other of the extreme

Presbyterians, who feared the effect of union upon the Scottish Church system. These two mutually hostile elements controlled a majority in the Scottish Parliament of 1703; and behind them was a large body of popular opinion, keenly nationalist in sentiment, which feared that union would mean that Scotland would be simply swallowed up by England.

The result was that the union negotiations came to nothing for the time being. The opposition in the Scottish Parliament passed an Act, known as the Act of Security, which provided that, on the death of Anne, Parliament should appoint her successor, but that this successor should not be the same as in England unless 'there be such conditions of government settled and enacted as may secure the freedom, frequency and power of Parliaments, the religion, liberty and trade of the nation, from the English, or any foreign influence.' Another Act provided that after the death of Anne the sovereign should be debarred from declaring war without the consent of Parliament. To both Acts the royal assent had to be given, because the temper of Scotland was dangerous. Both Acts were threats. They did not exclude a settlement, or even a union. But they showed that an early solution was of vital importance. Still more alarming was an Act providing for the general arming of the Scottish nation—and this at a time when England was engaged in the great war against France. The English government replied by calling out the militia of the northern counties; while the English Parliament passed resolutions threatening that Scotland should in all respects (and especially in trade) be treated as a foreign state 'until a union be had, or the succession settled as in England.'

There was thus for a short period a real possibility of war between the sister nations, unless they found a way to live together amicably. The situation needed very careful handling. But there was one powerful factor favourable to union. The Scots longed for a share in colonial trade; and union would give it to them. It was ultimately the advantage of being a full partner in the Commonwealth which overcame the difficulties felt by the Scots.

Commissioners were again appointed on both sides. The Scots first proposed a federal union. To this the English would not agree: they would only concede equality of trade if Scotland and England became parts of a single unified State, under a single Parliament. The Scottish commissioners gave in, subject to a fair financial adjustment, and to the

condition that the Scottish religious system and the Scottish system of law (which was, and still is, widely different from that of England) should still be maintained. On that basis the draft of a treaty of union was agreed to in 1706. The greatest generosity was shown by the English side both in fixing the representation, and in dividing the future financial burdens, of the united States. While Scotland was to have sixteen peers and forty-five members of the House of Commons, or one-eleventh of the whole, she was to pay only one-fortieth of the common revenue, and she was to receive nearly £400,000 to pay out the shareholders of the bankrupt Scottish African Company, and for other purposes. Her Church system and her legal system were to remain unchanged.

But this admirably just settlement had still to be adopted by both Parliaments. It naturally met with most opposition in the Scottish Parliament, which it sentenced to death. The discussions were carried on amid wild demonstrations of hostility by the Edinburgh mob and in many parts of the country. There is no doubt that if a plebiscite of the nation had been taken at this moment, there would have been a large majority against the union. Nevertheless it was passed by a majority of forty in the Scottish Parliament, in January 1707; and by March it had gone through all its stages in the English Parliament. On May 1, 1707, the separate kingdoms of England and Scotland ceased to exist, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain took their place.

This was the second of the long series of political unions which have marked the history of the British Commonwealth, the first having been the union of England and Wales in 1536. It is possible that a federal solution might have been in some ways better, because it would have given fuller expression to the distinctive characteristics of Scotland. Yet, thanks to the admirably moderate spirit in which the union was carried out, many of the real advantages of a federal solution were secured without the complexity which it involves. No attempt was made, either at the time of the union or later, to interfere with the distinctive usages of the lesser nation. She preserved her own educational system, her own system of law, and above all her own mode of Church organisation—that democratic system which had given to her people their main training in the art of self-government, and which had nurtured their eager love of knowledge. There can be no kind of doubt that the close and lasting partnership thus sealed was an infinite source of strength

to both nations in the great period of expanding opportunities which was about to open before them. But the partner who profited most was Scotland. She gained, from full participation in the Commonwealth, infinitely more than she lost by the sacrifice of her independent existence; and she at once began to enter upon a period of rapidly growing prosperity.

§ 7. *The Revolution Settlement in Ireland, and the Penal Code.*

In England and in Scotland the coming of William III. and the flight of James II. enabled changes to be made which the nations desired. In Ireland it was the coming of James II. as a fugitive, dependent upon the support of his Irish subjects, which enabled the will of the majority of the nation to be carried into effect, though only for a moment; and the subsequent victory of William III. brought not peace and national content, but the culmination of all those evils from which Ireland had suffered during the whole of the seventeenth century. Nothing could be more pointed or more tragic than the contrast between the effects of the Revolution in the two islands.

When James II. went to Ireland in the spring of 1689 the Irish Catholics saw their chance, under a Catholic king, of undoing all the injustices from which they had suffered; for the moment the Protestants were a helpless minority, cooped up in Derry and Enniskillen. A Parliament (to which practically only Catholic members were elected) passed a series of no less than thirty-five Acts, by which it cancelled the land settlement of Charles II., restored the lands which had been confiscated from the rebels of 1641, secured not merely tolerance but practically supremacy for the Roman Catholic Church, abolished Poynings' Acts and the subordination of the Irish Parliament to the English and Irish Privy Councils which they embodied, and shook off all the English restrictions on Irish trade. Had the settlement thus outlined been permanent, Ireland would have become in effect an independent country. James II. recognised this with alarm: he knew that the action of the Irish Parliament was destroying his chances of regaining the English throne. And indeed the very boldness of what may be called the Catholic Revolution in Ireland made it a matter of life and death to the English to reconquer the country, if Ireland was not to become an instrument in the

hands of Louis XIV. for the ruin of England and the establishment of French dominance in Europe. It was the tragic misfortune of Ireland that the redress of her own grievances should seem to be dependent upon the victory of a power which was undoubtedly a menace to the liberties of Europe as a whole, as well as of England and Scotland.

After the battle of the Boyne and the flight of James II. the Irish Catholics realised that victory was impossible. It would probably at this moment have been possible for William III. to win peace by a generous amnesty and the re-establishment of the conditions which had existed under Charles II. But the Irish Protestants, having just shaken off a nightmare of terror, were bent upon vengeance and upon securing their own ascendency beyond challenge. The chance was lost, and the war dragged on its weary course till the surrender of Limerick. The terms promised by the treaty of Limerick might still have been made the basis of peace and reconciliation, if they had been generously interpreted. But they were not even carried out in the letter. The blame for the era of merciless repression which now opened must be divided between the English Parliament, which was determined to enforce the supremacy of England over Ireland, and the Irish Protestants, who were resolved to reduce the Catholics once and for all to a position of helplessness.

The first step was taken by the English Parliament. In 1692, disregarding the rights of the Irish Parliament, it passed an Act requiring that all officials and all members of Parliament in Ireland should take the oath of supremacy and make a declaration against transubstantiation, which of course excluded all Catholics. The most remarkable feature of this Act was that it calmly assumed the power of legislating for Ireland over the head of the Irish Parliament —a power never hitherto claimed. Even Irish Protestants later protested with vigour against this claim. But on this occasion they made no objection, and thus weakened their position for the future. The reason was that the Act for the first time in history excluded Catholics from the Irish Parliament, and thus put all political power into the hands of the Protestant minority.

They used their power unflinchingly to set on foot a system of persecution which, though not as severe as Louis XIV. was enforcing upon the French Huguenots, was quite unparalleled, inasmuch as it was imposed by a minority upon the great majority of the nation. Though there were sessions

of Parliament in 1692 and 1695, it was not until 1697 that Parliament undertook the confirmation of the treaty of Limerick. The delay was in itself significant. Still more significant was the fact that when the confirmation came it was expressly limited to those articles which were 'consistent with the safety and welfare of their Majesties' subjects in Ireland.' What this meant had already been shown by earlier legislation. In effect, the treaty of Limerick was treated as a scrap of paper; and the Revolution settlement in Ireland was vitiated by the fact that it rested upon a gross breach of faith. Nothing can excuse this; it was as unwise politically as it was morally unjustifiable.

Meanwhile the foundations of the hideous Penal Code had been laid in the earlier session of 1695. Of course all the enactments of James II.'s Parliament in 1689 were cancelled: the very records of that Parliament were ordered to be destroyed. New laws provided that no Catholics should be allowed to teach in schools or even in private houses; no children might be sent oversea to be educated as Catholics, under penalty of the forfeiture of lands and goods—half the proceeds to go to the informer. Even the abominable encouragement of informers could not secure the complete enforcement of provisions so drastic; ordinary decency forbade; and Irish Catholic children of the well-to-do classes continued to be educated in the faith of their fathers. But in so far as this enactment was operative—and it was largely operative—it sentenced the Irish Catholic population to ignorance, and to the dangerous degradation and brutalisation which compulsory ignorance may engender. Again, to prevent any future Catholic rising, Catholics were forbidden to have arms, or even to possess a horse of the value of more than five pounds: any Protestant who offered five guineas for a horse belonging to a Catholic was legally entitled to take it.

In 1697 the Penal Code was still further developed. All Roman Catholic bishops and priests were banished from the kingdom and severe penalties were imposed upon those who should harbour them. This was intended to kill Irish Catholicism. It did not do so. The priests soon returned. But it put every Irish Catholic family at the mercy of informers. Again, marriage between Catholics and Protestants was strictly prohibited. If a Protestant heiress married a Catholic, her lands were to pass to the nearest Protestant relative. Finally the coping-stone was put upon the long series of confiscations of lands held by Catholics. All lands

belonging to ' rebels ' except those who were covered by the treaty of Limerick, were declared confiscated to the Crown, with this proviso, that Protestant heirs (but not Roman Catholic heirs) might succeed to the estates of ' rebels.' Two years later the English Parliament stepped in to seize the booty. The lands were sold, and the proceeds went into the English Treasury. The only excuse for this was that the war in Ireland had thrown heavy burdens upon the English Treasury.

No words of condemnation can be too strong for the injustice and the unwisdom of these provisions. They destroyed any hope that there might have been of a reconciliation between the sister islands. They show the spirit of domination and the brutal misuse of power at their worst. No Englishman or Scotsman can to-day read even the baldest records of these Acts without shame for the iniquity by which the whole Commonwealth was defiled.

But the spirit of ascendency did not show itself only in relation to the Roman Catholics. Of the Protestant minority at least half were Dissenters, and their numbers were steadily increased by immigration from Scotland. The English Toleration Act did not apply to Ireland; and in 1704 the Tory government of Queen Anne actually inserted in an Irish Act a clause providing that no one in Ireland could hold any public office, or be a magistrate in a municipality, unless he received the Anglican sacrament. Thus the Protestant Dissenters also were excluded from all political privileges.

Finally even the Anglican minority were not permitted to enjoy any real freedom of development. The Irish Parliament was made ineffective partly by Poynings' Acts, which placed its proceedings under the control of the English and Irish Privy Councils, and still more by the recently asserted claim of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland over the head of the Irish Parliament—a claim which had never been suggested in the case of Scotland. This power the English Parliament continued to exercise. It used it especially for the purpose of carrying into effect the policy of protecting English industries. Under Charles II. the export of sheep from Ireland to England had been prohibited. This had led to the growth of a considerable Irish trade in wool and to the rise of woollen manufactures. But as they might compete with the English woollen trade, the English Parliament, in 1699, prohibited the export of Irish wool or woollens to any country save England, where it was

already practically prevented by very high import duties. This arbitrary dictation of one country's economic policy in the interests of another was as short-sighted as it was unjust. It practically destroyed the Irish woollen trade, though some export to France was still carried on in defiance of the restrictions. And it destroyed the chance of finding, in this trade, a mode of relief for that part of the population which had been impoverished by the confiscations of land.

Even the small Anglican minority who held the monopoly of power in Ireland resented these invasions of the authority of the Irish Parliament, and this deliberate ruin of Irish trade. As a mode of escaping from these ills, and at the same time securing English ascendency, they proposed on several occasions that Ireland, like Scotland, should be completely united with England. The Union could have been quietly and easily carried out at any time during the reign of Queen Anne. And a union effected at this date would probably have gone far to reconcile the two countries, as it reconciled Scotland and England. It is true, the oppression of the Irish Catholics would not have come to an end. But the Whigs in England had no such extreme bitterness against the Irish Catholics as the Protestant garrison in Ireland, and union would probably have led to a gradual relaxation of the Penal Code. In any case, the full freedom of trade with all parts of Great Britain, and the share of the privileges of trade with the colonies, which would have been a consequence of the union, would have done much to stimulate industry and prosperity in Ireland, and to relieve the hideous penury of the peasantry which was one of the worst results of the existing system. But the opportunity was lost. Ireland was denied full membership of the Commonwealth, and remained a dependent State at the mercy of its greater neighbour. Postponed for a century, the Union came only when it was too late to effect any reconciliation.

The treatment of the Irish problem at the Revolution was not only the most unhappy part of that settlement, it was the darkest blot in the whole history of the British Commonwealth. Elsewhere membership of the Commonwealth meant freedom, not perfect indeed, but more generous than was to be found anywhere in the world. In Ireland it meant tyranny; it showed the spirit of mere domination at its worst. Political crimes of this order bring in due course their own punishment. Unhappily the punishment does not fall upon those who committed the crime.

§ 8. *The Revolution in the Colonies.*

The results of the Revolution in England were on the whole quietly accepted, both in the West Indies and in the North American colonies, and William and Mary were everywhere proclaimed. New York, where James II.'s personal authority had been most strongly established, was the only colony in which the Jacobite party made any attempt to retain its power. The grandiose scheme of unification which James II. had begun came to an unlamented end, and its agent, Andros, found himself suddenly powerless. The government of the Revolution had before it the opportunity of considering afresh the whole problem of colonial administration.

Although it was inevitable and right that the autocratic projects of James II., which had gravely threatened the liberties of the colonies, should be wholly abandoned, it would have been a good thing if the opportunity had been seized to work out some less objectionable mode of unification as a means of ensuring that the common interests of the whole group of colonies should be considered. During the eighty years which had passed since the first settlement was made in Virginia, the colonies had developed into a group of well-established states. Their total population amounted to some 200,000, including 50,000 in Massachusetts and 60,000 in Virginia. There were sharp distinctions of type and character among them, and they were all proud of their local independence. Yet they had many features and many interests in common. They were threatened by the same dangers from France and from the Indians, though in varying degrees. They were subject to the same economic system, which they could take no part in defining so long as they remained distinct and separate states. Their local traditions were not yet so deeply rooted as to make organised co-operation between them very difficult, and in 1689, when the struggle against the formidable power of Louis XIV. was just beginning, they were for the most part very conscious of their weakness. This had prevented the northern colonies from offering any violent opposition to the projects of James II. It would probably have led them to concur in a reasonable scheme of federation, such as was attempted in vain sixty-five years later. Had the government of the Revolution endeavoured to work out any such system, it could probably have

achieved success; and the success might have made it possible to solve the problem of the relations between the mother country and the daughter states, which was to become progressively more acute during the next period. But no suggestion of this kind was put forward, perhaps because it was thought that the authority of the Crown could be more easily imposed on twelve small and disunited states than on a single great organised federation. A fine opportunity for constructive statesmanship was thus lost. Had the statesmen of the Revolution organised the continental colonies, and those of the West Indies, into two federated groups, the whole subsequent history of the British Commonwealth, and probably of the world, would have been different.

In the absence of any centralised or federal organisation among the colonies themselves, the only common legislative and executive authorities for the whole empire must be the British government and the Parliament which now controlled it. Upon them must necessarily fall not only the responsibility for devising and maintaining the imperial trade system, but the whole responsibility and cost of imperial defence. To fulfil these functions a better organisation than had hitherto existed was required; and in 1696 a new Board of Trade and Plantations was set up, distinct from the Privy Council, and with a special office and staff of its own. Among the most active members at first were John Locke, and the very competent secretary of the Board, William Blathwayt, who must be regarded as the principal author of the colonial policy of the Revolution. Unfortunately the Board was much understaffed for the exacting work it had to do; while, what was even more serious, it had no independent executive power, but had to obtain confirmation for all its acts from the Secretaries of State or other ministers. This was the system by which colonial policy was controlled down to the year 1768, when for the first time a minister with real power was appointed to deal with colonial questions. By that time the revolt of the American colonies had almost become inevitable.

But the Revolution brought about another profound change which deeply affected the colonies. Hitherto the colonies had been in the main concerned only with the king and his Privy Council, from whom they derived their charters, and from whom their governors received instructions. Except in regard to the main principles of imperial trade, they had not been regarded as being subject to the

legislative authority of Parliament. They were subject to English Common Law, and to such statute law as had existed before their legislative assemblies came into existence. But, in their own view, the colonial legislative bodies had a concurrent or parallel authority to that of the British Parliament. This doctrine had, indeed, never been definitely formulated, and was not to be formulated for a long time to come; but it represented, roughly, the practice of the past, and the working theory of the colonial system. The link which held the empire together had been the Crown, and the independent executive authority which it wielded. But the essence of the Revolution of 1689 was that the Crown passed under the control of Parliament, to which ministers became steadily more clearly responsible. And this undeniably altered in a material way the relations of the colonial governments to the government of the home country. This consequence of the Revolution was not yet grasped on either side; but it was to have portentous results.

Meanwhile a readjustment of the colonial system was being carried out. The new policy was nowhere clearly defined, but expressed itself in practical policy. It had two main aspects, economic and political. On the economic side it was governed by theories which will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.[1] The main theory was, that it was the duty of government and Parliament to use all their powers for the purpose of stimulating the productive industries of England. This involved a further development of the protective policy laid down in the Navigation Acts of the Restoration; and a new Navigation Act in 1696 substantially strengthened the system. It involved also an attempt to secure the proper enforcement of the trade regulations in the colonies, where (especially in New England) they had been largely disregarded. For this purpose it seemed to be important that the home government should have control of the colonial governors, in order to be sure that they loyally carried out the instructions issued to them. For that reason the Board of Trade and Plantations preferred the 'royal' type of colony, like Virginia, in which the governor was directly appointed by the Crown, to the 'proprietory' type, in which, though subject to Crown approval, the governor was appointed by the proprietor, or the 'charter' type, in which the governor was appointed by the colonists. The great majority of the colonies were of the

[1] Book v. chap. iii. below.

'proprietory' type; the Board of Trade therefore set itself, on every opportunity, to get rid of the authority of the proprietor, or, where that was not possible, to bring it under effective supervision; during the next generation this policy was successful in a majority of cases, and the 'royal' type became the normal type. Thus economic policy influenced the political policy of the new régime.

Apart from this, one of the main aims of the colonial policy of the Revolution was to bring about an assimilation of the methods of government of the various colonies, and in a large degree this was successfully achieved. The fact that the charter of Massachusetts had been formally cancelled offered an opportunity of revising the system of government of this very important colony. A new charter was issued to Massachusetts in 1691, under which the old forms of the trading company were at last abandoned. The Crown obtained, for the first time, the right of appointing the governor; but in place of the old anomalous franchise limited to church members a democratic franchise, with a small property qualification, was laid down; and the legislative assembly, besides enjoying full powers of legislation and taxation, was given the unusual right of nominating the 'assistants,' or members of the governor's Council. It may fairly be said that the Massachusetts charter of 1691 was a statesmanlike piece of work: it put an end to the religious intolerance which had long marked the great Puritan State, and in a real degree it democratised the constitution of the colony. Incidentally this charter merged the old colony of Plymouth with Massachusetts. Connecticut and Rhode Island, whose charters, though threatened by James II., had not actually been suppressed, were left undisturbed in the possession of their old system. They remained the only colonies in which the governors were popularly elected. In general, indeed, it may be said that the Revolution statesmen showed no jealousy of popular government in the colonies, though they were naturally anxious to secure that the governors should everywhere be appointed or controlled by the Crown, as the only means whereby the maintenance of a common policy, under the direction of the central government, could possibly be ensured.

The principle of colonial autonomy in legislation and taxation was in truth fully accepted by the system of the Revolution. It was recognised as one of the essential characteristics of the British system that local representative bodies should alone make new laws or levy taxes on

the colonies, in every sphere save the sphere of imperial trade. The executive government, on the other hand, was held to belong properly to the Crown, in the colonies as in England. On the political side the main result of the Revolution settlement was that the variations of the earlier period largely disappeared, and that a certain uniformity of method was established. Everywhere, save Connecticut and Rhode Island, the head of the executive was directly or indirectly controlled by the Crown. Everywhere he was assisted by a small Council, corresponding to the English Privy Council, and usually (though not in Massachusetts) nominated by the governor. Everywhere he had to work with a representative law-making and taxing body, with powers which, within the limits of the colony, corresponded to the theoretical powers of the English Parliament.

As nearly as might be, this system was, and was meant to be, a reproduction of the English system as it was understood at that date. But we have seen that in England Parliament was inevitably led to use its financial powers as a means of controlling government. The whole long struggle of the seventeenth century had mainly turned upon this; and it had ended by establishing parliamentary supremacy. It was inevitable that similar conditions should in the colonies lead to similar results. There was bound to be a conflict for supremacy between the assemblies and the governors: it was already beginning in the years immediately following the Revolution. But there was this difference between the constitutional struggle in the colonies and that in England. Behind the governor was the king who appointed him; and the king himself was now dependent upon the British Parliament. Hence the struggle for ascendency between governors and assemblies almost necessarily involved a conflict between the colonies and the mother country, unless some means of avoiding this result could be found. The need for such a solution was not yet realised by anybody. It might well appear that the colonies were treated with the utmost generosity when they were given institutions modelled on those of the home country, which were the most liberal in the world. Yet the plain fact was that, just because the colonies were politically free, they were bound to aim at the enlargement of their freedom; for it is of the essence of liberty that it strives for its own fulfilment.

This inevitable tendency was, however, modified and partly obscured by two important factors, one of which

tended to intensify the colonial desire for greater independence, while the other tended to check it. The first was the commercial policy followed by the mother country, a policy of protection for English trade interests, certain aspects of which were resented by many of the colonies. The other factor was the danger from France, which had now become very real. For the Revolution coincided with the opening of the direct conflict between the French and the British colonies in America, which was to last for more than seventy years, and was only to end with the destruction of the French American empire. During all that period the colonies, disunited as they were, and without military organisation, could not fail to realise that their security depended absolutely upon the protection of the mother country, and especially upon the navy, the main defence against French attacks. So long as this danger lasted, the constitutional struggle could never be allowed to go very far.

[The books by Lodge, Trevelyan, Ranke, Hallam, already referred to; Macaulay's *History*; C. G. Robertson's *Statutes and Documents*; Acton's lecture on 'The English Revolution' (*Lectures on Modern History*); Maitland's *Constitutional History of England* (Period IV.: Public law at the death of William III.); Hume Brown's and Lang's *Histories of Scotland*; Mackinnon's *Union of England and Scotland*; Lecky's *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i.; Channing's *History of the United States*; Lucas' *Historical Geography of the West Indies*.]

CHAPTER VII

THE DOWNFALL OF LOUIS XIV

(A.D. 1689-1713)

§ 1. *The War of the League of Augsburg, and the British share in it.*

THE two wars against Louis XIV., of which the first may almost be said to have begun with the landing of William of Orange in England, together constituted the second of the four great ordeals by battle through which the British Commonwealth has had to pass during the course of modern history; and in this struggle, as in each of the others, the Commonwealth found itself called upon to defend not only its own liberties, but at the same time the freedom of Europe from the dominance of a single power. We have already seen in an earlier chapter (Chapter V.) that the security and even the possibility of the Revolution settlement depended upon the course of the first of these two wars; and we have also seen that if the islands had not been ranged on the side of the banded peoples of Europe and against the great French king, Louis' triumph would have been all but certain. The freedom of the islands did not indeed seem to be so directly imperilled in this struggle as in the Elizabethan war against Spain. Yet the expanding liberty of the British constitutional system would assuredly have been endangered if Louis XIV. had been successful; and the stability of the European system was even more directly endangered than in the earlier war.

By 1692, as we saw in Chapter V., all serious danger to the islands and their new system of government had been removed; and as this meant that they were able to devote their strength to the continental struggle, it may be said that by the same date the possibility of victory for Louis vanished also. The war raged still for another five years; but only on one occasion—in 1696—was there any serious threat of an invasion of Britain, and that came to nothing.

We need not follow the course of the fighting on the continent. Its main feature was that though the French

armies won victories they were never able to turn them to advantage; because France was ringed about by such a circle of enemies that she could never throw her whole strength upon one point. The main fighting was in the Netherlands; and here, in the cockpit of Europe, regular English armies for the first time played their part alongside of the armies of the allies. Each year William III. went across to lead the campaign. Year after year he was beaten in the field, notably at the battles of Steenkerke (1692) and Landen or Neerwinden (1693); but always he was able to prevent these defeats from leading to disastrous consequences. His only considerable victory was the recapture of the great fortress of Namur (1695), which the French had taken in 1692, and which commanded the line of the river Meuse, the most direct line of advance against the Dutch. The campaigns in the Netherlands consisted, indeed, very largely of elaborate manœuvres round great fortified places; for the art of fortification had been brought to a very high pitch of perfection by the French engineer Vauban and the Dutch engineer Cohorn.[1] Meanwhile there was constant fighting, not so fierce but equally indecisive, in Germany, on the frontiers of Savoy between France and Italy, and in the north of Spain, where from 1694 onwards Louis XIV. was conducting an invasion.

The part played by England in the continental war was far greater than it had ever been in any previous continental war of modern times, and this ordeal formed and tested the traditions of the English regular army: the battles of this war are the earliest enrolled on the standards of some of the oldest English regiments. But, important as it was, the contribution of the army was less important than the contribution of the navy. In the naval operations of this war the old rivals, English and Dutch, acted in co-operation. But the Dutch played a more and more subsidiary part as the war went on. Their resources were strained by the land-fighting; and from this time onwards naval supremacy unmistakably belonged to England.

No great naval battle was fought after the battle of La Hogue in 1692, and therefore the naval side of the struggle attracted little attention. But that was because the French fleets dared not come out to fight. It is characteristic of naval warfare that there is apt to be least fighting when the

[1] The predominance of the art of fortification in this and the following wars is reflected in the fortress-games played by My Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.

silent pressure of naval might is doing its work most efficiently, and thus its importance is liable to be overlooked; and although the best ways of using naval power were not yet fully understood, its influence was decisive. After the battle of La Hogue British troops could be shipped freely to any part of the continent where they were needed, while there was no real chance that French troops could be landed in any large numbers in the islands. That was one great result of naval superiority. But it also exercised a more direct influence on the course of the struggle by land, as was strikingly shown when a French attack was directed against Spain in 1694. A strong attack, pressed home, would have forced Spain out of the war, and released French forces which might have sufficed for a decisive victory in the Netherlands. But an effective attack could not be carried out if all supplies had to be sent through the passes of the Pyrenees. At first the French were able to use the short sea route from Toulon. But when an English fleet appeared in the Mediterranean in 1694 and 1695, its mere presence was enough to cut the sea-communications of the French, and to ensure the failure of the Spanish campaign. Thus a decisive victory was won by the navy, without any fighting —a victory more important than many battles in Flanders. In 1696 the English fleet was recalled from the Mediterranean, because there was a threat of a French invasion of England. The result was that the attack on Spain was renewed, and that the Duke of Savoy was forced to make peace with France. Nothing could have shown more clearly the importance of naval strength.

Another result of the naval supremacy of the allies was that French commerce, which had been so laboriously built up by Colbert, almost disappeared from the seas, and France had to do without the strength she could derive from this source. Her sailors revenged themselves by privateering at the expense of English and Dutch commerce, and the losses caused to the English and Dutch mercantile marine were on a very large scale. They were larger than they need have been, had naval power been rightly used, and they caused great outcries of alarm at home; they were indeed immeasurably greater than the corresponding losses of the French. But this was because there were extremely few French ships exposed to capture, whereas, in spite of losses, the number of English ships plying the seas grew rapidly during the war. The losses which were due to privateering were in fact of very small importance in comparison with

the total ruin of French oversea trade; and at the end of the war English foreign trade was stronger than it had ever been.

Finally the war inevitably extended to the colonies, and the fierce colonial rivalry of England and France, which lasted, with intervals, until 1763, began during these years. In 1690 the French in Canada planned a triple attack upon the divided English colonies. Though the population of French Canada amounted to only about 20,000, against some 200,000 in the English colonies, they had the advantage (for warlike purposes) of being controlled by a single despotic government, while the English colonies had twelve distinct governments, often at cross-purposes with one another, and each weakened by the conflict of authority between the governor and the Assembly. The French plan was to win the Hudson valley, and so cut off New England from the southern colonies: this remained the principal French objective throughout the long struggle down to 1760. But the attack had little success, though the town of Schenectady on the Hudson was sacked, and its people massacred. To this the New Englanders replied by a vigorous attack on Canada, led by Sir William Phipps, Governor of Massachusetts. Port Royal and Acadia (Nova Scotia) were captured and held throughout the war. Quebec also was attacked. It might have been captured had the mother country been free to send ships and men to share in the expedition; for no help on any large scale could be expected from France. But the navy was fully occupied in home waters. There was intermittent fighting also in the West Indies, and on the coast of West Africa. But this sporadic warfare was only a foretaste of what was to come in later wars, when the struggle between France and England flamed out in every part of the world, and on all seas. So far as the colonies were concerned, the main result of the war was that it taught the colonists that they stood in danger from the French, and therefore strengthened their loyalty to the British connexion. For it was already obvious that, but for the shield of the navy, far distant as it was, the colonies would have been exposed to a much more formidable attack by French veteran troops.

§ 2. *The Problem of the Spanish Inheritance.*

In 1697 the dreary War of the League of Augsburg came to an end with the Peace of Ryswick, which

marks the first stage in the downfall of Louis XIV. For the first time in his reign he ended a war without making any gains; indeed he had to restore all he had seized since 1678 with the exception of Strasbourg. France was loaded with debt, and the prosperity which Colbert had built up had almost vanished. Above all, the power on the seas which, thanks to Colbert's work, had seemed within the grasp of France in 1689, was now definitely lost, never to be regained. Most of the allies were not less eager than France to welcome the restoration of peace. The Dutch had suffered terribly from the strain of war; they had seen the commercial leadership which they had so long held pass into the hands of their English rivals. The English, who had gained more from the war than any other power, scarcely yet realised the value of what they had won, and were keenly aware of the burdens of war, and of the hardships it inflicted. Eager above all for peace, now that the danger of French dominion seemed to be removed, the Tory majority in Parliament insisted upon reducing the army to the lowest possible limits, though the king believed that the maintenance of an adequate force would be the best safeguard against future dangers, and was convinced that a new struggle was bound to come before long.

Indeed a complex and dangerous problem, which had loomed before the minds of European statesmen for more than thirty years, was becoming urgent: it was in order to be free to deal with this problem that Louis XIV. had been eager to end the last war, even on unfavourable terms. This problem was nothing less than the question what was to become of the vast dominions of Spain. Charles II. of Spain, the last descendant of Philip II. in the direct male line, had been an ailing weakling ever since his accession in 1665; he had no children, and his death might be expected at any moment. He had two sisters, who would with their heirs come next in the strict order of succession. The eldest had married Louis XIV. of France; by the marriage treaty she had renounced her rights of succession, in consideration of the payment of a large dowry by Spain; but the dowry had never been paid. The second had married the Emperor Leopold I. She had died after giving birth to a daughter, who had married the Elector of Bavaria and borne a son known as the Electoral Prince of Bavaria; but she also, on her marriage, had renounced her rights to the Spanish crown. If these renunciations were both held to be valid, the succession would go to the representatives of the previous

generation. But Charles II.'s father had also had only two sisters; one of whom had married Louis XIII. of France, and was Louis XIV.'s mother, while the other had married the Emperor Ferdinand II., and was Leopold I.'s mother. Thus in both generations intermarriage had given a claim of almost equal weight to France and to the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs. Neither of these powers would ever consent that the whole Spanish inheritance should pass to the other. None of the other European powers could feel safe if either of the two great continental States were thus enriched, and enabled possibly to dominate the world. Above all, the prospect that the whole of the vast empire of Spain should pass under the control of France was a mere nightmare to European statesmen, who had found it extremely difficult to resist the strength of France alone.

Here, then, was the prospect of a more gigantic and terrible war than any that had gone before, and the only possibility of averting it was by coming to an agreed solution of the problem beforehand. Louis XIV., who had at last learned how dangerous it was to have to deal with the united opposition of Europe, was willing for a compromise; and he therefore entered into negotiations with William III., as the leading statesman of the Grand Alliance. It has been held that in thus undertaking by 'secret diplomacy' to arrange for the partition of the Spanish dominions these two princes were committing a crime against Europe. They were, in fact, adopting the only possible means of avoiding war. A public discussion of the question, by a congress consisting of representatives of absolute princes all thinking of their own interests alone, would have led to no result at all. It was absurd that questions so vital to Europe, and to every European country, should be determined by the mere accidents of dynastic inheritance. The Spanish dominions did not constitute a national State whose fortunes concerned only the Spanish people. They included some of the most important parts of Italy. They included the Netherlands (Belgium), which formed an essential defence of the Dutch against France. Above all they included the immense and misused empire in the New World, with all its neglected opportunities of trade and settlement. And the disposition of these dominions, scattered over the world, must certainly involve the issues of peace and war. If Louis XIV. and William III. could arrive at a compromise which would avert war, they would be benefactors of humanity.

After long discussions, in which Louis XIV. showed an

admirable and quite unexpected moderation, a settlement was reached in what was known as the First Partition Treaty (1698), whereby Spain, the Netherlands and the Indies were to go to the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, while the Spanish lands in Italy were to be divided between Austria and France. Even this solution raised a storm when its terms were announced; the pride of Spain would not consent to the loss of any of the Spanish dominions; the Emperor was unwilling to abandon any part of his claims. These difficulties might have been overcome. But the practicability of this solution was shattered when in 1699 the young Electoral Prince died of smallpox; the problem had to be tackled afresh.

Knowing that the indignation of the Spaniards might lead them more readily to accept a French king than to see their empire divided, Louis XIV. had to choose between this alluring prospect and a renewal of his policy of compromise. But it was not certain that the Spaniards might not choose an Austrian in preference to a French king; and in either event a long and dreadful war seemed likely. So Louis reconciled himself to a new partition-compromise, and showed himself yet more moderate than before. In the Second Partition Treaty (1699), also arranged with William III., he agreed to allow Spain and the Netherlands and all the Indies to go to the Emperor's second son, provided that he undertook never to unite the Spanish and Austrian crowns. France was to be compensated by the acquisition of Lorraine, whose duke was given the Italian-Spanish duchy of Milan. These were amazing concessions, and they show how sincere was Louis' desire to avoid war.

But the new arrangement, though it was agreed to by most of the powers of Europe, did not win the assent of the parties most immediately concerned. The Emperor would not accept it: he was not willing to renounce one jot or tittle of his claim to the whole inheritance. Above all, Spain would not accept it: even in her weakness her pride refused to submit to the sacrifice of any part of her dominions. The aim of her statesmen was to keep the empire together by securing for it the strongest possible protection; and with this aim in view, after long palace intrigues, Charles II. signed in October 1700 a will bequeathing the whole of his dominions to the second grandson of Louis XIV. Should he refuse to accept, the will provided that the whole inheritance should go to the second son of the Emperor.

Three weeks later Charles II. died; and the terms of his will were formally communicated to France.

What was Louis to do? If he refused the Spanish crown on behalf of his grandson, the claim under the will would pass to the Habsburgs, who would certainly accept it. In that event, would England and Holland support France in insisting that the partition treaty should be carried out? It was practically certain that they would not: in both countries the peace party had the upper hand, and in England, whose voice would be decisive, the Tories, vehemently opposed to William III., had reduced the army to negligible numbers, and were in declared hostility to the partition treaty. They were, in fact, inclined to be friendly with France, especially those among them who were Jacobite in sentiment. If Louis held by the partition treaty and refused the Spanish inheritance, he must either look on while the Habsburg house, the traditional enemy of France, was restored to the overwhelming power it had enjoyed in Charles V.'s time, or he must fight, single-handed, to prevent this. The acceptance of the will, even if it involved war to defend the rights of his grandson (and it was not certain that war would be inevitable)—a war in which all the resources of Spain would be added to those of France—seemed to him, not unnaturally, to be preferable to a single-handed war in which he would fight under every disadvantage. He decided to accept the will; and under all the circumstances (and especially in view of the attitude of the English Tories) he cannot be blamed for accepting it. William III. naturally regarded his action as a breach of faith; but it is fair to remember that the partition treaty was of little value unless it was accepted by the Emperor and by Spain, neither of whom would have anything to do with it.

Louis cannot fairly be blamed, if he is judged by any standard of seventeenth-century statecraft. But the situation created by the combination of France and Spain under practically the same controlling will was indeed alarming for Europe, and above all for the maritime powers. Yet so strong was the desire for peace that during 1701 both England and the Dutch tardily and reluctantly recognised Louis' grandson, Philip V., as King of Spain. The Emperor, indeed, refused to consent; and began war against the Spanish dominions in Northern Italy, now garrisoned by French troops. But the Emperor alone could do nothing. He was almost penniless, and he had on his hands a dangerous

revolt in Hungary, which broke out in this year. If Louis could use his position moderately, he might still secure a peaceful victory more brilliant than his armies had ever been able to win for him.

But the intoxication of triumph made him forget the moderation he had so painfully learnt. Already the trading classes in England and Holland were alarmed by the prospect of being excluded from trade with Spain, which had been very lucrative to both countries. It was a sign of what was coming when Louis obtained from his grandson the *Asiento*, or monopoly of the import of negroes into Spanish America, for French merchants. But far more serious things were to come. Louis declared that his grandson could not renounce his right of succession to the French crown—the only thing that would have placated the alarms of other powers. He displaced the Dutch garrisons which had guarded the great fortresses of Belgium, and replaced them with French troops. These places were known as the 'barrier' fortresses, because they formed the only protection for the Dutch against the menace of French conquest: that 'barrier' had now gone, and the Dutch felt profoundly apprehensive. Finally, on the death of James II. (1701) Louis formally recognised his son as James III., King of England, Scotland and Ireland. This was the very year in which the Tory Parliament had passed the Act of Settlement, definitely excluding James from the throne. This action, which seemed like dictation to England, and threatened the restoration of a Catholic king by the united strength of France and Spain, aroused even the Tories to indignation and to a sense of national peril. War fever rose to the highest pitch in England. It rose high among the Dutch also. And William III. found himself for the first time supported by national feeling in both countries when he set to work to recreate the Grand Alliance of the last war. In the new and more gigantic struggle upon which the islands were entering, there would be no such division and uncertainty of purpose as there had been in the last war.

But William III. had no sooner completed the preparations than death came to him. He was not permitted to see the final issue of the long conflict upon which his whole life and strength had been spent. His successor, the placid and rather stupid Queen Anne, had none of his profound knowledge of diplomacy and war. But she was entirely under the influence of John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough, whom William III. had designated as his

successor in the command; and Marlborough was to show himself as great a diplomat as William, and an infinitely greater general.

§ 3. *The Military Problem and the Greatness of Marlborough.*

In the War of the Spanish Succession Louis XIV. was far more favourably placed than he had been in the war of the League of Augsburg. Then he had had to depend upon the resources of France alone. Now all the men and resources of the Spanish empire, which could be turned to great effect by French organisation, were at his disposal. He held all the fortresses of the Spanish Netherlands, which had baffled his attacks in the previous war, and thus he gravely threatened the Dutch. He was freed from all anxiety on his southern frontier. He held the keys of the Mediterranean, where the allied fleets had no base of operations. At the same time he had helpers in Europe whose aid might be of the highest value. The Hungarians were in revolt against the Emperor. The Elector of Bavaria, Austria's nearest neighbour on the west, joined the French side, and there was good hope that, taken between these two fires, and threatened also from the Spanish dominions in Italy, the Emperor might be crushed, and the keystone of the Grand Alliance knocked out. If in 1702 Louis had commanded resources equal to those which he had wielded in 1689, his complete victory would have been assured, and he would have been master of Europe. Even after the exhaustion of the last war, France was still able to put in the field armies which were slightly more numerous than those of the Grand Alliance, and they had the supreme advantage of real unity of command; moreover they fought on interior lines, while their enemies were both politically and geographically divided.

At the opening of the war all the advantages thus seemed to lie on the side of France: all save one, whose importance few realised. France had lost the command of the sea, which she had possessed in 1689. Her fleets were never strong enough to meet those of the maritime powers on anything like equal terms. And that proved to be the determining factor. This was to be the first great war in which the weight and power of naval superiority were to be clearly displayed; and this in spite of the fact that only one pitched battle was fought at sea, a battle in itself in-

decisive and ill-managed. In the long run sea-power won the war for the allies, though of course it would have been almost helpless without the land forces. But sea-power united the allies, it linked all the scattered operations into a single great campaign, and it opened to the allies and largely denied to Louis the resources of the outer world.

In William III.'s war England had been only one of the partners in the war. In the War of the Spanish Succession (the first which was fought by the United Kingdom of Great Britain) the islands played the dominating and controlling part. It is true that their armies formed but a small part of the total forces engaged, though they often had to undertake the most dangerous operations. But British wealth (and in a less degree Dutch wealth) paid in subsidies a large part of the upkeep of the armies of the allies; without this aid they could not have taken the field in sufficient numbers. The allied fleet was the main pillar of the whole alliance; and in the allied fleet the British contingents now completely outnumbered those of the Dutch. And, finally and most important, the strategy of the war was in the main directed by the genius of a great English soldier. At the critical moment England produced, in John Churchill, Earl (and later Duke) of Marlborough,[1] one of the greatest generals in history, and certainly the greatest in her own history; a man equally remarkable in all the gifts of military leadership, in strategy or the planning of campaigns, in tactics or the fighting of battles, and in the diplomatic gifts so necessary when a body of heterogeneous allies had to be kept together and persuaded to play their parts in subordination to a general plan.

Marlborough had already shown something of his remarkable military gifts during the previous war, both on the continent and in Ireland. But he had never been given a command worthy of his abilities, because William III. had never been able to trust him. In an age of treacherous politicians, he had been the most treacherous of all; his desertion of James II., and his influence with the Princess Anne which had led her also to desert her father, had been among the decisive factors of the Revolution of 1688; yet throughout the reign of William III. he had been in constant communication with the exiled king. A devouring personal ambition was perhaps the main reason for this lack of principle; and with it was linked an extraordinary meanness and greed in money matters. But whatever may be thought

[1] There is a short life of Marlborough by Sir W. Butler.

of the morality of this great man, in intellectual and practical power, in courage, in resourcefulness, and in the capacity for taking broad views without losing sight of details, he towered above all his contemporaries. William III. had recognised some of his qualities, and had named him as his successor in the military command. When the chief responsibility for the war rested upon his shoulders, he rose superbly to a great opportunity ; and, in spite of all his faults, won his place among the greatest leaders of men whom the British Commonwealth has produced.

For eight years he wielded a degree of power such as few Englishmen have ever enjoyed. Through his wife, a very able and domineering woman to whom he was devoted, he exercised for some years a complete ascendency over the mind of the Queen. In close conjunction with his most intimate colleague, Godolphin the Lord Treasurer, he directed English policy and played a principal part in the political intrigues of the time, always with an eye primarily to the needs of the war. His was the diplomacy which held the alliance together ; and it demanded the highest qualities of patience and insight, in addition to the personal charm which Marlborough always knew how to exercise, to bring the touchy and consequential German princelings and the obstinate and fussy Dutch merchants to co-operate in schemes which were often so bold and far-reaching as to be wholly beyond their grasp. He was the designer of English war policy as a whole ; his was the brain which planned the various parts of the attack upon France and Spain in such a way that each should help the others ; and he showed a grasp of the relations of land and sea power and of the way in which they might be used to supplement one another, such as none of his contemporaries and but few of his successors have displayed. In addition to all this, he was the commander-in-chief of the allied armies in the Netherlands ; and though he never knew what it was to have a free hand to make the best use of the available forces, and was inconceivably hampered, especially by the Dutch agents who accompanied the army, his plans of campaign show a boldness and originality which few generals have surpassed. In the execution of his plans he showed that mastery of detail which the greatest men are the least ready to despise ; and the unerring skill with which he seized upon the critical position and the critical moment in battle made him as great a tactician as he was a strategist. Though he led a composite army, hampered by all kinds of jealousies,

and was nearly always outnumbered by the enemy, he achieved a complete mastery in the field. To his greatness it was due that the slow manœuvring about fortified towns which had marked the last war was replaced by bold strategic moves which left the enemy gasping. Only one among the generals on either side deserved to be named in the same breath with Marlborough; and this was the imperial commander, Prince Eugene, between whom and Marlborough there was always the most cordial confidence. Yet even Eugene was unable always to rise to the height of Marlborough's conceptions. It is hard to say of Marlborough whether he was greatest as a diplomatist, as an organiser, or as a leader in the field. Had he ever enjoyed the freedom of action which fell to Napoleon, his fame would be yet higher than it is. Yet the skill and patience with which he moulded refractory material, and gave cohesion to the disconnected and jealous groups with which he had to deal, form not the least marvellous of his achievements.

§ 4. *The War of the Spanish Succession.*

In the first two campaigns of the war Marlborough's largeness of vision had little opportunity of showing itself. The war seemed to fall into three distinct and apparently unrelated spheres, whose possible connexion with one another perhaps only Marlborough perceived. In the Netherlands, where the French held all the fortresses from Antwerp to the Rhine, and could fall back if necessary from one strongly fortified line to another, Marlborough began by skilfully mastering the fortresses of the Meuse, from the Dutch frontier to Liége.[1] That was the work of 1702; and it was just the kind of war of fortresses to which the Dutch were accustomed. In 1703 Marlborough made himself master of the lower Rhine, as far as Bonn, with the direct object of getting into touch with the forces of the Emperor in Southern Germany; the Dutch were meanwhile to attack Antwerp, but, checked by a sharp defeat, they gave up the attack, and Marlborough had to come to their aid. But he found it impossible to persuade the Dutch to join him in a vigorous forward move against the French lines, and the campaign ended disappointingly.

Meanwhile the Emperor had fallen into dire straits. Prince Eugene, after winning some successes in Northern

[1] See the map of the Netherlands, Atlas, Plate 20.

Italy, had been compelled to fall back before a French attack. The Hungarians were in open revolt; the Elector of Bavaria was threatening Vienna, and a big French army had crossed the upper Rhine, and made a junction with the Elector. It looked, in 1703, as if the destruction of the Emperor was inevitable; only the delays of his enemy saved him in that year; and in the next the threat was bound to be yet more formidable.

The third sphere of the war was on the coast of Spain, and was at first mainly naval. Here the primary need of the allies was for a permanent base, from which they could command the seas and also attack Spain. But an attempt to seize Cadiz (1702), made by an Anglo-Dutch fleet under Sir George Rooke, was a fiasco. It was ill-compensated by Rooke's seizure of the Spanish treasure-fleet, and the destruction of the French squadron which convoyed it; though this was acclaimed as a great victory by the Tories, who strove to set up Rooke as a rival hero to Marlborough. But the presence of the fleet in southern waters had one important consequence. It persuaded Portugal to join in the war on the side of the allies (1703), and thus opened a chance for a peninsular campaign, which would, it was hoped, distract the efforts of France. At the same time as the treaty of alliance, a commercial treaty between Britain and Portugal was signed, whereby Portuguese wines were given an advantage in the British market over French wines; and the English began to be a port-drinking people.

Thus the first two years had led to nothing decisive, and the three fields of fighting seemed to be quite unconnected. But Marlborough's far-seeing imagination had already connected them. From the Rhine he was to help the Emperor; from Italy (where the Duke of Savoy had joined the allies) an attack supported by the fleet was to be made on Toulon, and aid was to be given, if possible, to the French Protestants of the Cevennes, who were in open revolt against the persecution of Louis XIV.; from Portugal, and perhaps also (thanks to sea-power) from the eastern coast of Spain, a further attack was to be directed against the Franco-Spanish power. Thus Louis XIV. was to be exposed to a converging attack on all sides. Only great military genius could plan a scheme so far-reaching. Only naval supremacy could make it possible.

The year 1704 saw the first steps in the execution of this magnificent conception. First of all the Emperor had to be saved. For this purpose Marlborough designed a daring

march through Germany from his base on the Rhine.[1] But he dared not let his plans be known. The Dutch would have been terror-struck at the notion of being left to defend themselves against the French; nor was it safe to let the French army in the Netherlands get an inkling of his design. He therefore feigned an attack on Eastern France by way of the Moselle valley. But this was only meant to divert attention and to give him an excuse for massing his troops at a convenient point. The campaigning season had scarcely opened before he was marching swiftly across Germany, and by June he had made a junction with the principal allied army in South Germany. The jealousy of its slow-moving and pedantic commander forced him to be content with the absurd arrangement that they should hold the supreme command on alternate days. But Marlborough used his own days with such skill that on one of them he won the dazzling victory of Blenheim (August). The result of this brilliantly conducted battle was that the combined French and Bavarian army, rather larger than that of the allies, was completely broken, with a loss of 14,000 casualties and 11,000 prisoners, including the French commander, Marshal Tallard. It was the first great defeat in the field that the French had suffered during Louis' reign. The Emperor was saved. Bavaria was reduced to impotence. The French had to withdraw west of the Rhine, followed by an allied army. The whole situation was reversed, and from this time onwards the advantage was always on the side of the allies.

During the progress of the Blenheim campaign nothing of importance had been done in the Netherlands. But the great Mediterranean scheme had been well begun. A combined English and Dutch force, under the Earl of Galway, had been landed in Portugal to co-operate with the Portuguese in an invasion of Spain from the west. Admiral Rooke had seized the inadequately garrisoned Rock of Gibraltar (August 1704) to serve as a base for the allied fleet in the Mediterranean; and when a French fleet sallied out from Toulon to try to relieve it, he had beaten it off in a naval battle off Malaga—the only pitched battle on sea during the war. It was not a decisive victory; but as the French fleet never again challenged the allies to battle in this war, it had the effects of a complete success. The loss of Gibraltar was so serious a matter to Spain (since it gave to the allies the control of the entrance to the Mediterranean) that the fortress was fiercely attacked both by sea and land

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 23 (*c*).

during the winter; but the siege was raised by a British fleet in March, and henceforth Gibraltar, the key of the Mediterranean, remained securely in British hands.

In 1705 the campaign in Spain was begun in earnest. While Galway, with a mixed British, Dutch and Portuguese force, advanced into Spain from Portugal, the fleet under Sir Cloudesley Shovell carried round a small force to the east coast, under a daring, reckless, irresponsible hero of romance, Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough.[1] Peterborough landed on the coast of Catalonia, where the people were violently anti-French in sympathy, and readily took up the cause of the Archduke Charles of Austria. Catalonia and Valencia were rapidly won; and the support of the fleet made it easy for these provinces to be held.[2] In the next year, 1706, an even more dazzling success was won, when Galway, advancing from Portugal, succeeded for a moment in occupying Madrid itself; and, though he had to evacuate the city and fall back to make a junction with Peterborough, the mere fact that enemy forces had been in Madrid, the very heart of Spain, where no hostile army had been seen since the expulsion of the Moors, made a profound impression upon the imagination of Europe.

1706 was an even more brilliant year for the allies than 1704. In the Netherlands[3] Marlborough had in 1705 broken through the strong fortified line, curving from Antwerp to Namur, which the French had been preparing for three years, and which was held by larger numbers than Marlborough commanded. In May 1706 he followed up this success by the most brilliant of all his victories, that of Ramillies, in which he broke the northern French army, inflicting losses nearly five times as great as he suffered. The result of this tremendous victory was that nearly all the fortified towns of the Netherlands surrendered; and the way seemed almost to be open for a march on Paris.

Nor was this the end of the tale of victories; for Prince Eugene was at the same time driving the French pellmell out of Northern Italy, and had won a crushing victory at Turin. Never in the course of modern history had such a series of disasters been inflicted upon any power as the hitherto unconquerable French armies had been compelled to endure during the years 1704-6. Louis was forced

[1] There is a short life of Peterborough, by W. Stebbing, in the English Men of Action Series.

[2] See the map, Atlas, Plate 19.

[3] See the map, Atlas, Plate 20.

to ask for peace. He was willing to let the Archduke Charles have Spain, and to leave to the Dutch a barrier of fortresses in the Netherlands. Peace might well have been made on these terms. But neither the Emperor nor the British government would agree to the terms proposed; and the hammer-blows which were beating down the pride of the Great King went on.

It would have been well if peace had been made after the victories of 1706; for the terms then obtainable were as good as those by which the war was ended seven years later; and the campaign of 1707 saw a series of grave disappointments for the allies. The romantic adventurer and military genius, Charles XII. of Sweden, of whom we shall have something to say later,[1] appeared in Germany and threatened to attack the Emperor; the German princes in alarm withdrew some of their troops; Marlborough had to spend his time in journeying to see Charles XII. and win him round; and so nothing was done in the Netherlands. In Southern Germany the imperialist forces suffered a severe defeat from the French, which seemed for a moment to imperil Vienna once more, as in 1704. An attack upon Toulon, delivered by Prince Eugene with the support of Sir Cloudesley Shovell's fleet, was a fiasco; its only fortunate result being that the French burnt the best ships of their Mediterranean fleet to prevent their capture by Shovell, and so abandoned any pretence of holding their own by sea in the Mediterranean. Finally in Spain the allied forces (who found that everywhere except in Catalonia popular feeling was against them), attempting a new attack on Madrid, were disastrously defeated at Almanza by the Duke of Berwick, a natural son of James II. and one of the ablest generals in the service of France; and thenceforth the allies were able to do no more in Spain than to cling to Catalonia with the support of the fleet. The position in Spain being now very insecure, it was necessary to have a base safe from attack, and near the eastern Spanish coast. The naval supremacy of the allies made this possible. In 1708 a British force captured the island of Minorca,[2] whose magnificent harbour of Port Mahon gave them a safe place in which to winter and refit their ships.

But the set-backs of 1707 were only temporary. In 1708, though Louis XIV. made a desperate attempt to turn the successes of 1707 to advantage, and for a moment regained most

[1] Book VI. chap. ii. p. 667.
[2] See the map, Atlas, Plate 19.

of the towns of Western Flanders, Marlborough won a brilliant victory at Oudenarde, which regained most of what had been lost, and broke the main French army defending Paris on the north. If Marlborough could have had his way, he would have marched straight on Paris, and dictated peace in the French capital. But even Prince Eugene, who had come with a large imperial force to co-operate in what had now become the main field of battle, thought this too daring. Nevertheless the all-important city-fortress of Lille was captured; and, for the first time for two generations, victorious hostile armies were encamped upon the soil of France.

Once more Louis offered peace. He was willing to make immense concessions; willing that his grandson should give up the whole Spanish inheritance save only Naples and Sicily; willing to surrender all the Belgian fortresses as a 'barrier' for the Dutch, and even to give up Strasbourg and Franche Comté. The allies demanded that he should, in effect, himself undertake to expel his grandson by force from Spain should the Spaniards refuse to accept the Archduke for their king; and on this demand the negotiations broke down. Marlborough was not directly to blame for this failure; indeed, he sympathised with Louis' refusal to submit to such an indignity. But whoever was to blame, the obduracy of the allies enabled Louis to appeal to the patriotism of France, and not in vain, for a final effort.

Yet even so, the tide of disasters continued.[1] Though the French fought with desperate courage, they were overwhelmed in the bloody battle of Malplaquet (1709); and during 1710 and 1711 Douai was captured, Cambrai was threatened, the allied forces were deep in France, and there seemed nothing to prevent Marlborough from attaining his ambition of capturing Paris and dictating peace amid Louis' own splendours at Versailles. The misery and impoverishment of France can scarcely be exaggerated. This was the awful retribution for the high-handed insolence of Louis' early days; his people paid the price in ruin.

§ 5. *The Peace of Utrecht.*

From the final degradation Louis was only saved by a change of ministry in England. As the war had progressed, Marlborough and Godolphin had been driven to throw themselves more and more upon the support of the Whigs,

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 20.

who were ready to pursue the war to the bitter end, because they saw in Louis the encourager of all the evil deeds of Charles II. and James II., the protector of the exiled Stewarts, the tyrant of Europe. The Tories, on the other hand, had gradually drifted back to a sentiment of friendship towards France. The Jacobite elements in the Tory party were getting the upper hand; they were beginning to dislike the idea of a Hanoverian succession and more foreign rulers; and on all grounds they were eager for peace. In 1710 the ministry of Godolphin and Marlborough, which had carried on the war throughout, fell from power, and was replaced by a Tory ministry under Harley and St. John.[1]

That the Tories should desire peace was natural and healthy: the war had already lasted five years too long.[2] But the methods they adopted were indecent in their haste, and open to the charge of treachery. They opened secret negotiations with France, without consulting their allies. They recalled Marlborough in disgrace; and gave instructions to his successor, the Duke of Ormond, which practically required him to leave his allies in the lurch. And when the negotiations began, they made no attempt to find any safeguard for the interests of the unfortunate Catalans in Spain, who had been encouraged to revolt by the promise of English help.

With Marlborough no longer in command, and the British forces practically withdrawn, there was no advantage to be gained by the allies from a further prolongation of the war. But the issues to be settled were so complex and widespread that there had to be a prolonged congress at Utrecht before the terms of peace were concluded among the western powers (1713); and it was not until a year later that the Emperor could bring himself to accept the inevitable and to abandon hopes of the Spanish crown. The main features of the peace settlement[3] were that Louis XIV.'s grandson was allowed to retain the crown of Spain and the Indies, but only on condition that the French and Spanish crowns should never be united. All the outlying Spanish dominions in Europe passed from Spanish control. The Belgian Netherlands were given to Austria, but burdened with the condition that the Dutch should have the right of garrisoning a line of eight 'barrier' towns as a defence against France, and that in the interests of Dutch trade the river Scheldt

[1] See below, Chap. ix. p. 635.

[2] Swift's pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies*, gives a brilliant argument for the Tory view.

[3] See the map, Atlas, Plate 10.

should be closed to traffic. This meant the ruin of the great port of Antwerp. In the eyes of Europe Belgium was only of importance as a defence against possible French aggression; and under Austrian rule, and hampered by Dutch jealousy, Belgium was in practice denied every opportunity of prosperous development. The duchy of Milan in Northern Italy, the kingdom of Naples in the south, and the island of Sardinia were also given to Austria, which thus became the dominating Italian power; a position that was to prove disastrous to herself as well as to Italy. The Duke of Savoy was rewarded for his faithfulness to the allies by the grant of the island of Sicily, with the title of King. He was later compelled to exchange Sicily for the poorer island of Sardinia. This new royal house was in the long run to unify the whole of Italy under its rule. By a curious coincidence, the same group of treaties contained the formal recognition by Europe of the assumption of the title of King of Prussia by the Elector of Brandenburg; and just as the kings of Sardinia were in the distant future to become the rulers of a united Italy, so the kings of Prussia were to become the masters of a united Germany.

But the most important aspect of the settlement of 1713 was the position which it gave to Britain, the power which had been, above all, responsible for the overthrow of Louis XIV. In Europe Britain acquired the rock of Gibraltar, and the island of Minorca with its fine harbour. These acquisitions meant that a secure foundation was provided for British naval power in the Mediterranean. They were the formal recognition of British supremacy on the seas.

Even more important was the effect of the treaty upon the colonial rivalry of France and Britain. During the course of the war there had been little fighting in the colonial field, for the fierce struggle in Europe engrossed all attention and all available resources. The French in Canada, hopeless of effective aid, did not venture on any attack such as they had attempted in 1690; and though there were border raids, there was no formal war until in 1710 a joint British and New England expedition was sent against Acadia (Nova Scotia). It conquered the colony, and, in honour of the Queen, gave the name of Annapolis to its chief settlement, hitherto known as Port Royal. In 1711 a more elaborate naval and military expedition was planned against Quebec. But it was badly conducted, and failed completely. The treaty of Utrecht[1] ceded Acadia, henceforth

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 54.

known as Nova Scotia, to Britain ; but it made no attempt to define the boundaries clearly, and this gave rise to much controversy in the future. Newfoundland also, where there had been both French and British settlements, was recognised as a definitely British colony, subject to certain fishing rights which were reserved for the French. And this meant that the two sides of the mouth of the St. Lawrence were now in British control, and that the existence of the French settlements in Canada proper was endangered. Engrossed by the strenuous conflict in Europe, the European States had latterly paid comparatively little attention to colonial questions. But the treaty of Utrecht may be taken as marking the establishment of British supremacy in the colonial field, as well as in naval and mercantile matters. Finally the treaty of Utrecht was accompanied by an Asiento Treaty with Spain, whereby the monopoly of the import of negro slaves into Spanish America, enjoyed since 1702 by France, was transferred to Britain, which obtained also the right of sending one annual shipload of goods to the Spanish colonies.

The treaty of Utrecht is a landmark in the history of the British Commonwealth, which emerged from the second great ordeal of its modern history as the greatest naval, mercantile and colonial power in the world, enjoying a prestige in the world's affairs such as it had never known before. There were still to be strenuous struggles before supremacy was won ; but the British power entered upon the next era, an extremely important one in colonial history, with every advantage on its side. The first round in the long conflict with France had been definitely won. Fifty years before it had seemed an uneven conflict ; for France was then not only the greatest power in the world, and the most intelligently governed, but her population outnumbered that of the islands by nearly two to one—fifteen millions against eight. Now the reign of the Great King which had opened in such splendour, and with such superb hopes, was closing in gloom ; and all the promise of the future seemed to rest with Britain.

[I. S. Leadam's *History of England from the Death of William III. to the death of George II.* is the best modern summary of the period. Mahan's *Influence of Sea-Power in History* and Corbett's *England in the Mediterranean* for the naval struggle; Fortescue's *History of the British Army* and Stanhope's *War of the Spanish Succession* for the military side ; Acton's lectures on ' Lewis XIV.' and on ' The War of the Spanish Succession ' (*Lectures on Modern History*) ; Seeley's *Growth of British Policy* ; Morris's *Age of Queen Anne* (Epochs of Modern History).

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

(A.D. 1660-1714)

§ 1. *The Causes of the Growing Wealth of Britain.*

One of the most striking aspects of the struggle against Louis XIV. was the immensity of the financial burden which it imposed upon Britain, and the ease with which this burden was borne. In the first half of the seventeenth century Charles I. had found it quite impossible to pay the relatively small subsidies which he had promised to the Protestant powers engaged in the Thirty Years' War, and had been compelled to withdraw from the conflict. But in the two great wars against France between 1688 and 1713 Britain maintained a navy incomparably stronger than the England of Charles I. had ever possessed, even after the levy of ship-money; she maintained efficient armies of regular troops in the Netherlands and in Spain; she paid, in subsidies, a large part of the cost of maintaining the armies of her allies; she suffered immense losses of her mercantile marine; and at the end she emerged as the wealthiest of the European States, with a financial credit equal to her military prestige. How is this startling contrast to be explained?

In part, no doubt, it was due to the fact that Parliament gave its support to the French wars, and therefore taxation could be legally levied on a scale which was never possible to Charles I. In part it was due to the fact that the cumbrous and unproductive methods of assessing taxes practised under Charles I. had been drastically altered by the Puritan republic, whose changes had in the main been made permanent: the traditional customs duties on foreign imports were revised, an excise was levied on various home produce, and a system of direct taxation on land, which under the name of the land-tax provided a substantial proportion of post-revolution revenue, had been worked out.

But these explanations are insufficient. Whatever system of taxation had been adopted, the burdens borne by the generation following the Revolution would have crushed

the England of Charles I. or of Cromwell. The real explanation is twofold. In the first place, Britain had become an immensely richer country than she had been in the time of Charles I., prosperous as she then was. In the second place, she had learned how to organise her wealth for national purposes.

Her new wealth arose primarily from foreign trade, on which the strength of the Dutch also mainly depended, and from the profits of her rapidly increasing mercantile marine. One of the chief foundations of her foreign trade was her growing colonial empire, the bulk of whose most valuable produce gave employment to her shipping and was distributed from her harbours to the principal European countries. But trade with non-British territories was even more lucrative than colonial trade. England had, indeed, since the Restoration, definitely wrested the leading place among the trading nations of the world from Holland. This was, no doubt, in part due to the Navigation Acts and the great development of English shipping which they encouraged; in part to the heavy strain which wars had imposed upon the Dutch; and in part to the fact that the colonial and tropical produce of which England had the handling found a ready market in the European countries, and made it easy to open up trade with them.

But the development of her home industries also gave a stimulus to the growth of her foreign trade, and was in its turn stimulated by the demand of goods for export. New industries, notably the manufacture of silk, were taking root and thriving; and this was in no small degree due to the fact that England offered a safe refuge to exiles driven forth by religious persecution, notably the French Huguenots, who came over in considerable numbers during the ten years before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), and in yet greater numbers after that event.

The new industries from the first were mainly organised and conducted by capitalist employers—men of substantial means who devoted themselves largely to studying the needs of home and foreign markets, and who paid the workpeople to produce the kinds of goods most in demand. The older industries also were more and more falling under the direction of capitalists—a process which, as we have seen,[1] had begun long before. Capitalist control of industry tended to leave the workpeople too much at the mercy of their masters, unless government stepped in to

[1] See above, Book III. chap. X. p. 344.

protect them ; and government did very little in this period for the protection of the workpeople, because the capitalist employer was regarded as the mainspring of industrial development. This led to some unhappy results : the wage-earning classes certainly did not obtain their fair share of the growing prosperity of the country, though as yet it cannot be said that they suffered from such grave evils as came with the great industrial changes of the next century. But unquestionably the capitalist system, though as yet it was in its infancy, did help to bring about a great increase in the country's total wealth by encouraging initiative and experiment. And there was one consequence of the system which had a definite political importance, as we shall see. The capitalist system required that the employer class should have at their disposal considerable amounts of easily realisable wealth wherewith to carry on their operations ; and a part of this wealth could be made available for national needs.

Already, then, when the great wars with France began, Britain was becoming the wealthiest country in Europe. She was on the way to become at once the chief market of Europe for colonial and tropical goods, the chief carrier of the world's trade, and one of the chief producers of manufactured goods ; and, because of this, wealth was beginning to flow into her coffers from all sides.

British trade with Spain provides a striking illustration of the way in which this happened. Spain depended largely upon the vast quantities of the precious metals which she extracted from her American empire. She had done little or nothing to develop the productive activity of these lands in any other sphere than that of the extraction of gold and silver. She jealously excluded British merchants from direct trade with these dominions ; and although a considerable smuggling trade was carried on with them, the wealth which they produced did not in any large degree go directly into British hands. But there was a large sale for British woollen goods and other manufactures in Spain ; and since Spain did not produce much that could be exchanged for these commodities, they had to be paid for in gold and silver. Hence a large proportion of the bullion which came from Spanish America indirectly found its way to Britain : Spain was always on the verge of bankruptcy, Britain grew richer year by year. The reason for this contrast was that Spain identified wealth with gold and silver, and thought that her economic welfare was ensured

by the stream of gold and silver which came to her from America; under the influence of this fallacy she failed to develop the industry of her people in the production of the most valuable forms of wealth—the things which gold and silver can buy, and which can only be produced by hard work. Britain, on the other hand, being fortunately without any gold mines, had learnt to make wealth in the only possible way, by making the things that men need, or making them available for men's use by bringing them to the places where they were wanted. It was the work and the enterprise of her manufacturers, her shipbuilders, her sailors and her merchants which were making her rich; the gold and silver of the Spanish mines naturally came to them in exchange for the goods they had to sell, whether these goods were actually made in Britain itself, or whether they were brought by British enterprise from the countries which produced them, to be sold at a profit in the countries which needed them.

The immense growth of British foreign trade and of British shipping directly contributed to the cost of the war, because every cargo of goods brought into British harbours paid customs duties; and in this way the colonies also contributed, since all their principal products were by law required to be sent to England before being distributed over the world. But in another way, more indirectly, foreign trade contributed, because those who conducted it had control of large amounts of wealth which could be easily realised—unlike the wealth of the landowning class, which (being sunk in the land) could not be easily realised. And this easily realisable wealth could be lent to government in large blocks, to enable it to meet the expenses of war or other heavy charges. Hence the second reason why Britain was able to bear the burden of the wars was that she could command the ready money to finance them.

Merchants engaged in foreign trade, and even manufacturers at home, had long since acquired the habit of depositing their money, until it was needed, in some safe place—commonly in the strong rooms of goldsmiths. The goldsmiths were paid for this service largely by being able to lend out at interest the funds in their hands; that is to say, by acting as bankers. It was in the second half of the seventeenth century that the business of banking began to be seriously developed in London, and some of the oldest English private banks trace their origin to this period. As the bankers always held, at any given moment, very

large deposits, they could lend to those who wanted temporary advances without at all interfering with the trading activities of their depositors, so long as they kept in hand a sufficient margin to meet all probable demands, and got back their loans reasonably soon. Governments had long been in the habit of borrowing in this way, paying back as soon as the taxes came in. But it was in the time of Charles II. that this practice became a regular one, because Charles II. was always in debt; he was always borrowing from the goldsmiths, and paying back when the taxes or the French subsidies came in: his government could not have gone on without this convenience. But of course the loans had to be repaid, at the agreed dates; otherwise the goldsmiths could not keep faith with the merchants whose funds they held. When Charles announced in the famous Stop of the Exchequer (1672) that he was not going to repay his loans at the agreed dates, but was only going to continue paying the interest, the result was a very serious dislocation in the trading activities of the London merchants.

Now this sort of arrangement, of borrowing in advance of the taxes and repaying when the taxes came in, could only go on if the annual income of government was not very far short of its annual expenditure, so as to make sure of regular repayment. When the great wars with France began, it became impossible to raise by taxation a revenue equal to the total expenses. Government therefore found itself getting into deeper and deeper financial difficulties. The only way out of them was that it should be able to borrow *without the necessity of early repayment*. The ordinary private bankers could not lend what was needed on these terms, because they had to be ready to repay their depositors when called upon, and could therefore only make short-term loans. The adoption of a device for getting permanent loans was the main means which enabled Britain to meet the cost of the war. And the device was the foundation of the Bank of England, which was carried out in 1694 by Charles Montague, the Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the suggestion of a Scotsman, William Paterson, who was also responsible for the almost simultaneous establishment of the Bank of Scotland.

The arrangement which led to the establishment of the Bank of England was that in return for a large loan *not* repayable at a fixed date, government not only undertook to guarantee the interest by allotting certain taxes for the

purpose, but also, in order to compensate the lenders for foregoing the future use of their money in profitable mercantile enterprises, granted them a charter whereby they were enabled, with the support of public credit, to carry on the business of bankers on a very large scale, lending money at interest either to government or to private traders and receiving deposits of money from merchants, just as the goldsmiths or private bankers had done, but doing so with far greater security than any private banker could do, just because the power and credit of the State were behind them, and because they carried on the business on a much larger scale than any private banker could do. The bank thus established commanded from the first the confidence of the whole commercial community, because its subscribers and directors included the greatest merchants. It transacted the government's financial business, and the funds thus passing through its hands, as well as the private deposits of merchants and the annual interest paid by government on the original loan, could be used in making temporary advances to merchants and others at good rates of interest. It raised fresh permanent loans for government as they were needed. It induced men who had funds for which they had no immediate use to deposit them with it instead of leaving them idle in a cash-box or a strong room, and thus made a larger proportion of the wealth of the country immediately productive.

Some people feared, in the first years of the bank, that the lending of large sums permanently to government would result in withdrawing wealth from commercial uses, and would therefore lead to a restriction of trading and commercial activities. But this fear was not realised. It was not realised for two reasons. The first reason was that government spent most of the borrowed money in the country, so that it came back into circulation. The second reason was that the confidence which the bank inspired persuaded men to trust it with their idle money, and thus drew out the buried wealth of the country, and kept it in active and productive employment. That is, in truth, the main function which a bank performs: it keeps wealth continually active in the production of fresh wealth. When a farmer has his barns full of corn, he has that much wealth, but as long as the corn lies in the barns it is unproductive. If he could sow it afresh as fast as he reaped it, and so get half-a-dozen crops instead of one in a year, his wealth would be many times more productive. What the bank did was that, by keeping the available wealth

continually active, by lending it to merchants who needed it for profitable enterprises and getting it back again with interest to be used again immediately, it enabled the wealth entrusted to it to reap three or four harvests in a given time instead of one. And therefore the new banking system, while providing government with the means for carrying on the war, also supplied British enterprise with the means for extending its influence more and more widely, and for producing more wealth even faster than it was destroyed by the operations of war.

§ 2. *The Influence of the 'Moneyed Interest' and its Effects upon National Policy.*

The establishment of the Bank of England immediately increased the political influence and importance of the merchants and 'moneyed men,' because it gave to them a definite and important place in the national system. Since they now obviously provided the essential means for carrying on national enterprises, they could not safely be disregarded, and consequently their influence began to be felt in determining national policy, especially in matters of trade, to a degree never before known. But most of the merchants and 'moneyed men' were Whigs; and they became all the more resolute in their Whiggism because they feared that a restored Stewart monarchy might repudiate the debt owing to them. The investors of money in the new National Debt which the Bank of England administered were in fact, or felt themselves to be, committed to the maintenance of the Revolution settlement, and this came to be one of its strongest bulwarks.

But because the Bank of England was regarded as a Whig institution, the Tories regarded it with hostility. It seemed to them that the upstart 'moneyed interest' was getting an improper degree of influence, and was ousting the 'landed interest' from its proper leadership in the nation. In the hope of balancing the power of the Bank of England, they started, in 1696, the idea of a Land Bank, which was to lend money to landowners, on the security of their land. But the difficulty was that wealth in the form of land was not easily realisable. The scheme of a Land Bank came to nothing; and the Bank of England and the 'moneyed interest' held the field, and wielded an ever increasing power.

The problems of trade and industry, and of the best ways of organising and encouraging them, had thus become in

this period a matter of deep concern not only to the trading classes, but to politicians and political thinkers. During the generation preceding the Revolution there had therefore been a far greater activity in speculation, discussion and writing on economic subjects than had ever been known before, and this discussion was probably more active in England than in any other country. It is not too much to say that the writings of such men as John Locke, Sir William Petty and Sir Josiah Child on these subjects constituted the beginnings of modern economic science. These writers thought of political economy mainly as a branch of the art of government: they were eager to discover how national welfare and national wealth were likely to be affected by the policy of the State, by its taxation, its trade regulations and its relations with other States; they asked themselves on what principles public policy could most profitably be directed towards these ends, and what forms of trade or industry ought to be encouraged or discouraged as advantageous or disadvantageous to the nation as a whole. Though, of course, they differed on many points, in the main lines of their thought they were generally in agreement. They had risen above the crude blunder of identifying wealth with gold and silver: they realised how Spain had suffered by basing her national policy on that fallacy. They saw that the real wealth of a country depends upon the amount and the quality of what it produces by the industry and intelligence of its inhabitants. And the object of their thinking was very largely to determine by what means government could most readily increase the production of the country. External trade they valued chiefly in so far as it led to a demand for British products; and for this reason they attached immense importance to what they called the Balance of Trade—to ensuring that the exports of home produce should at least balance the imports of foreign produce. They looked with great suspicion upon any line of trade which did not show a 'favourable balance'—which did not produce a large demand for British goods; and they distrusted all lines of trade that brought into Britain goods which competed with British products.

These ideas of the economists naturally dominated the minds of the trading and 'moneyed' interests; and because these interests had now a very great influence upon national policy, especially when the Whigs were in power, national policy after the Revolution was mainly governed

by a distinctive theory as to what the trade interests of the nation demanded—a theory which profoundly influenced not only the foreign but the colonial and the Irish policy of the period. The ruling idea of the Whigs was that the trade policy not only of Britain itself but of the whole Commonwealth ought to be conducted principally with a view to encouraging and developing industry (including agriculture) in Britain. They held that those branches of external trade should be helped and stimulated which seemed to increase the demand for British products, while those which did not seem to do so should be repressed. This idea led to the adoption of a strictly protective policy for British industry, enforced not only by means of tariffs, but in every other possible way, and in particular by the use of whatever power the British Parliament was able to exercise over the other members of the Commonwealth ; the supreme aim being to make Britain the manufacturing centre, as well as the market, of the whole Commonwealth, and also the purveyor of manufactured goods and colonial produce, on as large a scale as possible, to all other countries.

The effect of these ideas upon foreign policy was very apparent. Because France was a great manufacturing country, and largely exported manufactured goods, it was held that trade with France was undesirable. It was actually prohibited as early as 1678 ; the prohibition was naturally strictly enforced during the wars ; and it was in effect as nearly as possible maintained by high duties on French goods in the period following the war. The men of that generation could not see that France could not send goods to Britain without (directly or indirectly) taking British goods in exchange ; they thought of France as a rival shopkeeper, whose trade must be checked in every possible way. On the other hand, trade with Portugal did not compete with British manufactures. Portugal bought British woollens and other goods, in exchange for her wines and the products of her Brazilian colonies. Trade with Portugal was therefore to be encouraged ; and the Methuen Treaty of 1703, which tried to encourage Portuguese at the expense of French trade, was regarded as one of the greatest achievements of British statesmanship in the economic sphere.

Again, the effect of these ideas was seen in the attitude adopted regarding the East India Company. English woollens were not suitable for the Indian climate ; the goods brought by the company from India therefore had to be largely paid for with silver and gold, and there were

constant complaints that, instead of encouraging British industries, the Indian trade only drained away the bullion which was acquired by trade with Spain. So long as the imports of the company from India consisted largely of spices and other tropical produce, which did not compete with British products, these complaints were not much heard. But in the second half of the seventeenth century the company began to import large quantities of Indian woven stuffs, especially cotton goods; and in order to improve this market they began to direct the work of the Indian weavers so as to enable them to meet the needs of the western market, and thus increased the prosperity of the Indian weavers. But this was held to be destructive to the British cloth-making industries, both linen and woollen (there was as yet practically no pure cotton manufacture in England). So heavy duties were levied against these goods, and an attempt was even made in 1700 to prohibit their sale in England. This was an extremely short-sighted view. The import of Indian stuffs not only increased the wealth of India; it increased the wealth of Britain by giving her people a greater variety of materials, and her merchants a wider choice of goods for export to other markets. As a matter of fact, the attempt to check the trade had only a very partial success. Woven stuffs continued to form the bulk of the imports from India, and the Indian weaving industry continued to be developed by the operations of the East India Company, down to the time when the introduction of machinery enabled British operatives to outdo the products of the Indian looms. In so far as this policy succeeded, its only result was to check the growth of trade with India; which was indeed, at this date and for a long time to come, far less important than the trade with the West Indies.

It was partly this belief that trade with India was unprofitable, and partly the fact that the directors of the East India Company were largely Tories, which led the Whigs to encourage the 'interlopers,' or private traders who tried to break down the Company's monopoly. The Whig Parliament of 1693 passed a resolution 'that all the subjects of England have an equal right to trade to the East Indies unless prohibited by Act of Parliament': and in 1698 a rival company was founded by Act of Parliament and given (in return for a loan of £2,000,000) the exclusive right of trade with India, the old Company being allowed three years to wind up its business. All individual subscribers were to be allowed to carry on private trade; and it was

hoped that the members of the new company would export British goods to India on a larger scale than their predecessors. The old company ingeniously met the difficulty by subscribing to the new one, and thus obtaining the right to continue its trade. But the situation created by the rivalry of the two companies was so unfortunate, and had such bad effects in India, that in 1708 they were united after an arbitration by Lord Godolphin, and the old monopoly and the old methods of trading were re-established. Had the strife continued much longer, the Indian trade, and the future development of British influence in India, might have been imperilled; for as things were, only a monopolist company could afford the cost of keeping up the necessary permanent establishments in India.

The influence of Whig commercial ideas was still more disastrously seen in Ireland, where the power assumed by the British Parliament was used to crush out every industry that threatened to compete with the British staple trades. We have seen something already of the unhappy political results of this policy.[1] Its economic results were equally unfortunate. By impoverishing Ireland it not only alienated her, it made her less able to spend money on British goods; and it also reduced the amount and variety of the commodities which British merchants could take to foreign markets, to exchange for the goods they wanted there.

The same policy was pursued in the colonies. Here the object was twofold: to ensure, in accordance with the principles of the Navigation Acts, that the chief colonial products were sent to England, and that inter-imperial traffic was carried on wholly in British or colonial ships; and to ensure that the colonial market was reserved for British manufactures. The first object was aimed at in a new Navigation Act (1696), which tried to strengthen the provisions for enforcing the acts; and in an Act of 1706, which added rice and naval stores to the list of enumerated articles which could only be exported to England. The second object made the Whigs anxious to discourage the rise in the colonies of any industries competing with those of the home country. There was even talk of prohibiting the manufacture of woollen goods in the colonies; and a report of the Board of Trade in 1706 complained that some of the colonies had wrongfully encouraged the woollen and other industries instead of 'applying their endeavours to the production of such commodities as are fit to be encour-

[1] See above, Bk. v. chap. i. p. 505, and Chap. vi. p. 589.

aged in those parts, according to the true design and intention of those plantations.' It is true that no direct attempts to enforce such foolish restrictions were attempted in the period with which we are now concerned; that was to come in the next period. And, as yet, the policy of subordinating all other considerations to the development of the home industries had not yet done any such harm in the colonies as it had done in Ireland, because the colonies naturally devoted themselves to producing commodities which did not compete with those of the home country.

But it is evident that the attempt to found an empire upon an economic basis, which had been begun systematically by the statesmen of Charles II., was taking an unfortunate turn, such as must make it appear that the interests of the mother country were hostile to those of the daughter communities in the economic sphere, and that she was using her power as the head of the Commonwealth solely with a view to her own interests. That belief was, in the long run, when the French danger was removed, to lead to the tragedy of a disruption in the Commonwealth. It undid the good that was done when these young communities were made partners in the institutions of self-government. Trade interests were to prove themselves but a poor foundation for imperial unity. Yet it would be unfair to blame the statesmen of this age for taking a view which they shared with the statesmen of every other colonising country. All held that colonies existed primarily to enrich the mother country, and that their trade ought to be controlled for that purpose. Britain alone added to this doctrine the further doctrine that the colonies should in all local affairs be permitted to govern themselves. But political liberty combined ill with economic restrictions.

[Meredith, *Economic History of England*; Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*; Hewins, *English Trade and Finance in the 17th Century*; Rogers, *Bank of England*; Traill, *Social England*; Beer, *Old Colonial System*; Egerton, *British Colonial Policy*. Of the economic writings of the period probably the most important were Petty's *Political Arithmetic* and Child's *Discourse on Trade*.]

CHAPTER IX

PARTY CONFLICTS IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE

(A.D. 1702-1714)

§ 1. *The Whigs and the Tories.*

When Queen Anne came to the throne the very names of Whig and Tory were less than thirty years old, but already the two parties divided the whole kingdom between them, and their conflicts not only engrossed the attention of Parliament, but constituted the most important factor in the conduct of government. In the House of Commons the strength of the two parties was on the whole well balanced; the pendulum had already acquired the habit of swaying from one side to the other at each election; though in each of the five general elections of the reign, except that of 1708, the Tories had a larger or smaller majority. And this seems to indicate, what is probably true, that in the country as a whole the preponderance was on their side, though the Whigs were strongest in the most progressive and enlightened regions, notably in London and the bigger towns.

On the other hand, the Whigs now possessed a standing majority, though not a big one, in the House of Lords: in 1712 twelve Tory peers had to be created to ensure the passage of the treaty of Utrecht—the only instance of the use of the royal prerogative of creating peers to enforce the acceptance of a particular measure. The fact that the majority of the peers had now become Whigs is of great significance. It means that the greatest magnates of the realm were the least influenced by superstitious veneration for the Crown, and the most ready to thrust aside the royal authority and to replace it with their own; the conviction that this was their aim largely accounted for the revival of Toryism. The Whig party was, in fact, always and essentially an aristocratic party, though it had the support of the mercantile classes and the Dissenters. It was becoming, as we shall see,[1] a highly organised group of

[1] See below, Bk. vi. chap. i.

aristocrats, and was getting ready for that period of oligarchical rule which we shall have to review in the next Book.

The conflict of parties has never been more acute than it was during this reign. It extended even to fashions of dress; it divided society. And the strife mastered also the men of letters. All the best writers of the period lent their pens to one side or the other, and the keenness of the public interest in politics was by nothing more clearly shown than by the fact that politics dominated the literature of the age. Addison and Steele were Whig journalists as well as social satirists, and Addison became a Minister of State. On the Tory side the formidable pen of Swift was enlisted, and few pieces of political writing can ever have exercised a greater immediate effect than his brilliant pamphlet *The Conduct of the Allies*, in which he defended the peace policy of his friends Harley and St. John. Both of these Tory politicians were men of literary tastes, and the friends of men of letters; especially St. John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, who was himself a writer of great clarity and force. At no period of English history have men of letters been more influential in the political sphere, or played a bigger part in the governing society. One of the greatest of the group, indeed, Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, was never (like Addison or Swift) admitted to the friendship of the party leaders: he was only a struggling hack-writer, hired alternately by either side. Nevertheless he wrote some of the most effective pamphleteering work of the time, and his *Short Way with Dissenters* has never been surpassed for bitter irony. The political topics with which these writers dealt are for us as dead as Queen Anne herself, though the skill with which they were handled makes them still interesting. But the all-important thing was that the British peoples were being taught to think politically by having both sides in great political controversies presented to them in a vivid and interesting form. The process had begun during the Civil War; it had been revived in the eager discussions over the Exclusion Act; it had never died down since the Revolution; but it was in Queen Anne's time that the best literary power of the age began to devote itself to political subjects.

In considering the nature of the conflict between parties it is necessary to beware of identifying the ideas of the Whigs and Tories of Queen Anne's reign with those of the modern parties which are historically descended from them. To show the danger of such an assumption it is enough to

say that the Tories might plausibly be described as a party of pacifists, little Englanders, and free-traders; the Whigs as a party of militarists, imperialists, and high protectionists. That would be an exaggerated and misleading statement, but it would have an element of truth in it.

The root-belief of the Whigs was the fear of monarchy; and it was because Louis XIV. was the very type of absolute monarchy, quite as much as because he was the friend of the exiled Stewarts and the enemy of the Revolution settlement, that the Whigs were prepared to oppose him to the last, with implacable hostility. Their commercial doctrines, and their belief that France was the most dangerous rival of Britain in trade and industry, added to the vigour of their anti-French sentiments. They were also the inheritors of the continental policy of William III. The great nobles who formed the strength of the Whig party had a far deeper interest in and knowledge of continental politics than the Tories, who drew their strength mainly from the less educated country squires.

The very reasons which made the Whigs hostile to France made the Tories generally ready to be friendly with her. Many of them were Jacobites, open or concealed: the group known as the Hanoverian Tories were probably a minority of the party. As the reign wore on, and the memory of James II.'s misgovernment grew fainter, their fears for the Church diminished; and towards the end of the reign many of them were prepared to overturn the Act of Settlement, largely because they feared that the Hanoverian succession would mean the triumph of the Whigs. For they regarded the Whigs as a dangerous clique of great nobles who aimed at reducing the Crown to a nullity and putting their own power in its place, using the trading classes as their instruments. The Tories had none of the Whigs' enthusiasm for commercial and industrial development: they thought the 'moneyed men' were already getting too great an advantage over the 'landed interest,' and in 1712 they tried to strengthen the position of the landed interest by a monstrous Act which provided that no person not possessed of landed estate to the value of at least £200 per annum should be eligible as a member of the House of Commons. Nor did they take much interest in European politics. They would have liked to see England hold aloof from European wars and politics: if wars must be fought, they would have preferred to limit the fighting on the British side as far as possible to the sea. They hated the memory

of William III., and lost no opportunity of casting reflections upon him.

In the sphere of domestic politics the conflict between Whigs and Tories was keenest on the question of religion. The bulk of the Tories were staunch High Churchmen; they hated the Dissenters and the Toleration Act, all the more because the Dissenters were associated with the detested 'moneyed men' of the towns. The Whigs, on the other hand, were largely latitudinarian in religious belief; they were anxious to keep the Church under State control, all the more because so many of the Anglican clergy were Jacobite in sentiment; they did not wish to see the Church dominating politics, and they genuinely believed in toleration.

Thus the political aims of the two parties were sharply contrasted at nearly every point; and during this reign both sides were active in organising their resources. The Whigs had the advantage that they possessed in the 'Junto' a recognised group of leaders of great influence, who were in the habit of acting together and of planning beforehand the policy to be followed by the party. Somers, Montague, Orford, Wharton and Sunderland, who formed this group, were an exceedingly able body of men. They were learning how to make the utmost use of the prestige of the great territorial houses in influencing elections to Parliament; and under their leadership the Whig majority in the House of Lords and the solid Whig body of members of the Lower House commonly presented a united front. The Tories were more divided. There was a good deal of distrust between the extreme High Church leaders like Rochester and Nottingham, and the more moderate and intellectual younger Tories like Harley and St. John (Bolingbroke); there was friction also between the Jacobites and the Hanoverian Tories. The bulk of the country squires would have been content to follow the High Church leaders, but the group who may be described as the Young Tories had the brains of the party. The High Church party found their centre in a club which they had started in William III.'s time, and which was known, from the October ale its members loved, as the October Club.

§ 2. *The War Government of Marlborough and the Ascendency of the Whigs.*

At the beginning of the reign Marlborough and Godolphin dominated the ministry and were all-powerful with the

queen. They counted as Tories, though they were pursuing the continental policy of William III. which most Tories distrusted. Through Marlborough's influence over the queen, they controlled the power of the Crown. And for a time they carried even the extreme High Church Tories with them. To do so they had to give their support in 1702 to the Occasional Conformity Bill, which aimed at putting an end to the practice whereby many Dissenters got round the Test and Corporation Acts by taking the Anglican sacrament now and again in order to qualify for office. But the Whigs could be trusted to throw out this Bill in the House of Lords.

As time went on, however, and the war became more exacting, Marlborough and Godolphin found that they could not count upon whole-hearted support for their war policy from the high Tories. They gradually weeded out the High Church Tories from the government and more and more tended to throw themselves upon the support of the Whigs. They were able to do this in spite of the fact that the Whigs were in a minority in Parliament, partly because they still kept the support of the Young Tories, led by Harley and St. John; and partly because there was in the House of Commons a solid block of about one hundred government votes, mainly consisting of placemen, kept loyal by fear of losing their places, who were able, in conjunction with the Whigs, to outvote the Tories: in the Parliament of 1705, for example, it was calculated that there were 190 Tories, 150 Whigs, and 100 placemen. Ever since the Revolution the importance of the House of Commons had made the art of keeping a majority together—the art of parliamentary management—one of the chief preoccupations of governments. It could only be done—at any rate it *was* done—largely by means of corruption; and the methods of parliamentary corruption, begun by Danby in Charles II.'s reign, had been continued under William III. and were consistently practised by Godolphin. These methods seemed to provide the only means by which a steady and consistent policy could be pursued under a parliamentary system; they seemed to be the price that had to be paid for parliamentary government.

In 1708 Harley and St. John broke away from the ministry, which became wholly Whig, much to the distaste of Queen Anne, who was herself a Tory. The Whigs, having got the upper hand, and having, in the new Parliament of 1708, a clear majority in the House of Commons, could not

resist the temptation to strike a blow against the High Church party, which in their view was consistently undermining the principles of the Revolution. An intemperate cleric, Dr. Sacheverell, gave them their opportunity by publishing sermons in which he had preached the old Tory doctrines of divine right and passive obedience—doctrines which were obviously hostile to the ideas of the Revolution. The Whigs gave Sacheverell and his doctrines a gratuitous advertisement by impeaching him (1710) before the House of Lords, which found him guilty and sentenced him to suspension from the right of preaching for three years. The sentence was so light that it was popularly regarded as an acquittal. Sacheverell had got a cheap martyrdom. In the most extraordinary way he became a popular hero, as the defender of the Church against oppression, and he was fêted wherever he passed on his journey to his country parish.

The Sacheverell case was only important because it showed how strong a hold the High Church party and its out-of-date political ideas still exercised over a large part of the nation. It convinced Harley and St. John that the High Church line represented the best route to power; though Harley had close connexions with the Dissenters, and St. John was notoriously a religious sceptic. Already these leaders of the new Toryism were at work endeavouring to prepare for the overthrow of Marlborough and the Whigs. They were using with skill the methods of the back-stairs as well as the cry of 'the Church in danger.' Marlborough's position largely rested upon the influence which his wife wielded over the queen. But Anne was beginning to be tired of the tantrums of the domineering duchess; she had always hated the Whigs, and as a High Churchwoman she sided with Dr. Sacheverell. Harley was able to influence her through his cousin, Mrs. Masham, whom he got installed as a Lady of the Bedchamber. At a critical point in the war, when Louis' overtures for peace had been refused, and the last desperate phase of the war was about to begin, Marlborough and the Whigs thus saw the very foundations of their power shaking.

In 1710 the blow was struck. The queen was persuaded to dismiss Godolphin and his chief Whig colleagues, and Harley became Earl of Oxford and in effect Prime Minister —though the term had scarcely yet come into use. Marlborough was still allowed to retain his command for another campaign; but he was hampered in every possible way, and at the end of 1711 he was dismissed from all his

offices. The Young Tories had triumphed, and the field was clear for the development of their political ideas.

§ 3. *Bolingbroke and the New Toryism.*

Their first work was to open negotiations for peace, with almost indecent haste, and without any proper consultation with the allies. The negotiations were begun before Marlborough was recalled; the preliminaries were agreed to in September 1711; a group of twelve new peers were created to override the Whig majority in the House of Lords; and though there were considerable delays, the final terms were signed in April 1713. Here was the first note of the new policy. There must be a break with the traditions of William III. There must be an end to implacable war against the protector of the exiled Stewarts.

If St. John (now Viscount Bolingbroke), who was much the more energetic of the two leaders, could have had his way, the peace would have been followed by friendship with France. He strove to secure a commercial treaty which would have given France the rights of 'the most favoured nation,' and done away with the preference on Portuguese wines which was due to the Methuen Treaty of 1703. This would have been a substantial step towards freedom of trade, in which Bolingbroke believed. But the commercial classes were clamorous against such a policy; and though Defoe was told off to write up the question, the bulk of the ordinary Tories were not ready for so great a departure. The commercial treaty had to be dropped. Undismayed, Bolingbroke started negotiations for an alliance between Britain, France, Spain and Savoy, which was to be the foundation of the new Tory foreign policy.

Meanwhile the commercial policy of the Young Tories had expressed itself in another way. To strike a blow at the financial supremacy of the Bank of England, that stronghold of the Whig interest, they had started in 1711 a new body, known as the South Sea Company, which was to take over nearly £10,000,000 of the National Debt, and in return was to be granted a monopoly of trade with South America and most of the South Atlantic, using the interest payable on the debt for its trading operations. This, it was hoped, would supply a Tory balance to the Bank of England. We shall hear more of the South Sea Company. The foundation of these hopes was the expectation that large profits would

result from the commercial concessions which Spain was to grant as part of the terms of peace, and which were embodied in the Asiento Treaty.

It was all very well to strike a blow at the Bank of England; but the foundation of a new trading company with large privileges was hardly a good method of striking at the predominance of the 'moneyed men' whom the Tory squires hated. Oxford and Bolingbroke found a more certain mode of reassuring them in the Act restricting membership of the House of Commons to landed proprietors (1710). But what the mass of ordinary Tories wanted was to attack the Dissenters. Such an attack did not come with good grace from Oxford, who was notoriously in sympathy with the Dissenters, and had obtained a good deal of support from them.

To the religious sceptic Bolingbroke the religious motive for attacking Dissent made no appeal. But he was very ready to strike at a class who were known to be, in general, supporters of the Whigs and enemies of the Stewarts. Accordingly the Occasional Conformity Act was at last passed in 1711; good Churchmen might rejoice that Dissenters were now effectively prevented from becoming members of corporations or holding any public office, and good Tories that the influence of the Whigs in borough constituencies was undermined. And in 1714 another Act followed, for which Bolingbroke was primarily responsible. Excluded from the universities and from all the public schools, the Dissenters had created a series of educational institutions of their own. Bolingbroke's Schism Act aimed at destroying these institutions, and ultimately killing dissent at the root, by prohibiting any person not licensed by a bishop from teaching in any school; thus all young Dissenters would have to receive a Church education, or none. This monstrous piece of persecution was carried by the Tory House of Commons by nearly two to one. It passed through the Lords on the narrowest of margins, and a protest was placed on the records of the House by a number of Whig peers, including, to their honour, five bishops.

The attack on the Dissenters was accompanied by an attack upon some of the chief Whig leaders. Sir Robert Walpole, the ablest Whig debater in the House of Commons, was charged with malversation of public funds, and, though his defence was complete, was sentenced to expulsion from the House and imprisonment in the Tower as guilty of 'notorious corruption.' The Duke of Marlborough was charged with having received a commission of two and a half

per cent. on British subsidies to the Allies; and though it was proved that these deductions had been authorised by William III. to provide a secret service fund, a prosecution was started against him, to avoid which he had to take refuge on the continent.

Behind this venomous vendetta against the leading Whigs and the Dissenters lay a still more dangerous design. The Tory leaders were preparing to overturn the Act of Settlement and to bring back the exiled Stewarts; and most of their followers were prepared to support them in this policy, if the Pretender would only renounce Roman Catholicism, or even give an adequate guarantee for the security of the Anglican Church; a substantial number of them were ready to act even without such guarantees. Oxford and Bolingbroke knew that there was no chance of a continuance of their power if the Hanoverians succeeded to the British throne; and they disliked the idea of placing the islands under a foreign king, whose continental possessions would embroil British policy in all the complications of European affairs. In 1713 they opened secret communications with the Pretender; while the Jacobite Duke of Ormond, who had taken Marlborough's place at the head of the army, was also negotiating with the Pretender's agents. Ormond was appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, in order that the gateway into England might be in safe hands.

Oxford and Bolingbroke seem at first to have taken it for granted that the Pretender would readily renounce his religion as the price of regaining the crown: to the sceptic Bolingbroke it seemed ridiculous that he should hesitate. But to his honour James flatly declined even to discuss the matter when Oxford sent him a draft declaration. More serious, he would not pledge himself to give more than 'reasonable security' for Protestantism. This made Oxford hesitate. Bolingbroke, who cared nothing for religion, was prepared to go on. More and more his restless energy tended to oust Oxford from the leadership. By posing as a stalwart High Churchman, and as the author of the Schism Act, he had won the confidence of the queen: she was weak and ailing, and, as the end of her life drew near, her natural affections made her more friendly to the cause of her exiled brother; she hated her Hanoverian successors, whom she would never allow to visit the kingdom; she hated the Whigs, whom their succession would bring into power. On July 27, 1714, she gave way to Bolingbroke's eagerness, and dismissed the vacillating Oxford.

Bolingbroke was now, for the moment, master of the destinies of England. He was able to use all the machinery of government, and a working majority in Parliament, to facilitate a second Stewart restoration; and he looked forward to being the all-powerful minister under the new régime. Meanwhile the Whigs, in grave alarm, saw all the work of the Revolution endangered. During these anxious months they were preparing for resistance. They had collected arms, enlisted troops, and made plans to seize the principal fortresses. Had Bolingbroke's schemes succeeded, it is certain that they would have led to civil war, in which a considerable section of the Tories would have been ranged on the Whig side.

Civil war was averted by the sudden death of the queen before Bolingbroke had had time to make any preparations. She died on the first of August, only four days after Bolingbroke's triumph over Oxford, and before Oxford's place had even been filled. Two days before her death, when it was already certain, a meeting of the Cabinet was called at the royal palace at Kensington. Two Whig Dukes, Argyll and Somerset, who were members of the Privy Council but not of the Cabinet, presented themselves and insisted upon their right to take part in the deliberations as Privy Councillors; for the Cabinet was still an unrecognised institution, though it had practically been the centre of government ever since the Restoration. The presence of these Whigs amid the wavering and frightened ministers turned the scale. Other leading Whigs joined the Council. The fleet was ordered out. Troops were recalled from Flanders. The lords-lieutenant of the counties were ordered to disarm papists and non-jurors. A special envoy was sent off post-haste to summon the Elector of Hanover. Bolingbroke found himself suddenly powerless to do anything. Power had suddenly slipped from his hands, thanks to the resolute action of the Whig leaders. He gave in with the best grace he could muster. The new king was proclaimed, and everywhere the proclamation was quietly received.

On the 18th of September George I. landed at Greenwich. His first act was to give the chief offices of State to leading Whigs. Then the election of a new Parliament was ordered; and under the influence of the discredit which Bolingbroke's Jacobite intrigues had brought upon the Tories, the Tory majority disappeared, and the Whigs found themselves with a clear majority of 150 in the House of Commons. They

were careful, as we shall see,[1] to use every possible means of ensuring that they should not lose it again. The first act of the new Parliament (March 1715) was to move for the impeachment of Oxford and Bolingbroke. Oxford was fairly safe: nothing very definite could be proved against him. Bolingbroke's situation was far different. To avoid a worse fate, he fled to France, where he became for a time Secretary of State to the Pretender. In 1723, having realised the hopelessness of the Pretender's cause, he accepted a pardon under the great seal, and returned to England to play an even greater though less public part in national affairs.

It was a happy thing for the islands and for the Commonwealth at large that the conspiracy of 1713 and 1714 was baffled; for its defeat was in a very real sense the consummation of the Revolution. Though the Whigs would have fought for their ideas, it is by no means certain that they would have won, had Bolingbroke been given time to repeal the Act of Settlement, and had the Pretender given (as in the end he doubtless would have given) satisfactory assurances regarding the security of the Anglican Church. A restoration at this stage would unquestionably have meant a great triumph for the theory of divine-right monarchy, and would have involved a serious set-back in the development of the institutions of political liberty. It would also have meant the abandonment of that policy of religious toleration, the establishment of which, half-hearted as it was, had been one of the greatest triumphs of the Revolution.

Nevertheless, though Bolingbroke had played a mischievous and dangerous part in these intrigues, and though we are bound to recognise that his chief motive was a devouring personal ambition, it must be recognised that he was a man of very great power and insight, and that he stood for certain political ideas of real interest and value. This brilliant and dissolute sceptic and man of the world was very far indeed from sharing the traditions and prejudices of the dull country squires whom he led. Like his distant successor Disraeli, who admired him profoundly and was deeply influenced by his ideas, he had set himself to turn Toryism into an intellectual and progressive creed. Though himself the most virulent of partisans, he proclaimed himself the enemy of government by party. He held that the Whig clique of great nobles, backed by the Dissenters and the moneyed men, were striving to obtain a complete control, for their

[1] Bk. VI. chap. i. p. 653 ff.

own purposes, over the whole system of government, and he objected to the Hanoverian succession largely because the Hanoverian kings were likely to become the creatures of the Whig Junto. He held that the monarchy had an essential part to play in the British system of government, especially in preventing the ascendency of any such oligarchy, and in standing above parties and enlisting the services of the best leaders of national life. He held that the natural leaders of the nation were the landed gentry, and he aimed at ensuring their dominance. In foreign affairs he desired to see Britain pursuing a purely national policy, holding aloof from European complications and wars, and relying mainly on her fleet. In the economic sphere he was feeling his way towards a policy of free trade: he did not believe in carrying the hostilities of politics into the sphere of commerce, and he saw no reason why friendship, encouraged by commercial interchange, should not be established between Britain and her old rivals, France and Spain. These ideas were defiled and largely falsified by Bolingbroke's personal ambitions and by his unscrupulous methods. But they were tenable and defensible ideas, and they were to have a great influence in the future.

[Leadam's *England from 1702 to 1760*; Stanhope's *Reign of Queen Anne*; Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*; Sichel's *Life of Bolingbroke*; Hutton's *English Church from 1625 to 1714*; Roscoe's *Life of Harley*; Morris' *Age of Queen Anne* (Epochs of Modern History).

BOOK VI

THE WHIG OLIGARCHY; AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY

(A.D. 1714-1763)

INTRODUCTION

THE fifty years between 1714 and 1763 fall superficially into two almost equal parts. The first, extending from 1714 to 1739, was a period of quiescence, almost of stagnation, in which no changes or developments of great importance to the Commonwealth appeared to be taking place. The second, extending from 1739 to 1763, was filled with almost continuous war in Europe, on the seas, in America and in India, and ended with a series of dazzling successes which seemed to leave the British Commonwealth securely established as the greatest power in the world, mistress of the seas and of the destinies of the lands beyond the seas, to east and west.

Yet in spite of the sharp contrast between the first and the second halves of the period, a real unity links them together. The great conflict which fills the second half was slowly ripening during the first half, when under the shelter of peace the rivalry of France and Britain in oversea trade and in colonies was becoming more acute. Moreover the period as a whole has a distinctive character, because during its whole course the life of the islands and their policy towards the daughter communities in the New World and towards the other States of Europe, were dominated by the ideas of a powerful oligarchy, the land-owning Whig aristocracy, which had secured for itself an extraordinary control over all the machinery of government. For good and for ill the ideas and policy of the Whig oligarchy were to exercise a profound and lasting influence upon the development of the Commonwealth.

The ascendency of this oligarchy was perhaps a necessary stage in the growth of ordered political freedom in the British realms. It destroyed the possibility of the establishment of a system of absolute monarchy such as was almost universally prevalent in Europe. It turned the British realms into a sort of crowned republic, and showed (for the first time in history) that a large national State could be held together without the existence of a strong central power, independent of public control. It worked out the

machinery of cabinet government dependent upon Parliament. This system, which almost the whole world has borrowed from Britain, could never have been deliberately invented, and could perhaps only have grown up as the organ of a compact oligarchy. It is true that the Parliament upon which the new system was dependent was an unrepresentative body, largely controlled by the oligarchy, which did not hesitate to employ the methods of corruption. But it is probably also true that the machinery of cabinet government could scarcely have grown up under other conditions; and it is almost certainly true that had the Parliament been entirely free it would have fallen (in the circumstances of the period) into confusion; and the result of this might have been a restoration of the exiled Stewart kings, and possibly the establishment of a despotism. However that may be, the Whig oligarchy, for its own purposes, devised a scheme of government which proved in the long run to be capable of being used as the implement of a democracy, and which is the only machinery yet invented whereby the control of a large representative body over the conduct of government can be made effective. In another way also the oligarchy rendered real service to the growth of political liberty. It securely established freedom of speech and writing and thought, as part of the daily life of the community; and it secured that the administration of law should be independent of the will of government.

On the other hand the Whig oligarchy, inspired, as all oligarchies are apt to be, by the spirit of ascendency, pursued a far from enlightened policy in relation with the subordinate States of the Commonwealth. It perpetuated and even intensified the iniquitous oppression of Ireland. It failed to deal intelligently with the problems of government arising in the high-spirited and prosperous American colonies; it even emphasised the defects of the old colonial policy which were to lead to conflict and disruption in the next age; and a large part of the blame for the great schism in the Commonwealth which was to result from the revolt of the thirteen colonies must be laid at the door of those who controlled British policy in the first half of the eighteenth century. Finally, it failed to take any notice of, or to provide any safeguard against, the social ills which were already beginning to result from the rapid increase of British trade and industry.

Both by its achievements and by its failures the work of this period was thus of momentous importance for the future

of the Commonwealth; and when the period closed in a blaze of glory, leaving the British peoples supreme on the seas, supreme in the New World, supreme in trade, and in possession of the beginnings of an amazing empire in the East, it left them also faced by an array of problems such as had never faced any people before—an array of problems whose variety, complexity and difficulty were scarcely at all realised by the generation which had to solve them.

CHAPTER 1

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHIG OLIGARCHY: THE JACOBITE RISINGS

George I., 1714: George II., 1727.

§ 1. *The Insecurity of the New Régime, and the Jacobite Rising of* 1715.

Although Bolingbroke's plans for the restoration of the Stewarts had been easily defeated, thanks to the suddenness of Queen Anne's death, he always contended that if he had had only six weeks for preparation, instead of four days, he would have been successful. And it is not impossible that he was right. Probably a majority of the people of England would have preferred to call James III. king rather than the German, George I.; and when the new sovereign made his appearance his total ignorance of the English language and of English ways, and his lack of the arts of popularity, increased the disfavour with which he was regarded. Nobody felt, or could feel, any sentiment of personal devotion for George I. On the other hand, a multitude of the English country gentlemen had a sentimental loyalty for the exiled house, and this feeling was shared even by the London crowd. It would have been stronger and more dangerous if the Pretender had been a Protestant. But in any case the wide existence of this feeling was a grave source of weakness to the new dynasty. As George I. very well knew, it was only from the Whigs that he could expect whole-hearted support. From the first, therefore, he had to put himself wholly in their hands; the wealth, the territorial influence and the energy of the great Whig nobles, backed by the support of the 'moneyed men,' formed the bulwarks of his throne. But the Whigs did not support the new ruling house from any sense of personal loyalty. They supported it because its weakness and its foreignness gave them the chance of giving effect to the Whig theory of government; and they used their opportunity with such unflinching consistency that they

turned the monarchy, for half a century, into the mere instrument of their own oligarchical power. The fact that George I. was completely in the hands of the Whigs naturally increased the dissatisfaction of the Tories, which might have been very dangerous if the exiled prince had known how to use it.

In Ireland the great majority of the people would undoubtedly have welcomed a Stewart restoration. But the majority were effectively held down by the system of repression established after the Revolution, and the minority who ruled the country, and who alone had arms and resources, were the staunchest friends of the new line. Nevertheless Ireland always provided recruits for any attempt to restore the Stewarts, however desperate, though it was never proposed to make Ireland itself the scene of any of these attempts.

Finally, in Scotland the Jacobites were extremely strong; and they were reinforced by the resentment against the Union, which had not yet had time to die down: in 1713 there had been a serious demand for the repeal of the Union. The bulk of the Presbyterian ministers in the Lowlands were indeed, as was natural, hostile to the Stewarts, and they carried most of their flocks with them. But even among the Presbyterians a small section of extremists, angry because a rigid Presbyterian system had not been universally enforced, were ready to join the Pretender, and endeavoured to do so in 1715. A very large proportion of the nobles and the smaller landed proprietors in the Lowlands had strong Jacobite sympathies. And in the Highlands, where the clans still lived their own wild life apart, and were always ready for war, many of them were willing to repeat the adventures of Montrose and Claverhouse. They were not moved solely by the sense of traditional loyalty, though this was strong among them: a raid into the Lowlands always had its attractiveness, and the mere fact that the hated clan Campbell and its chief the Duke of Argyll were associated with the Whig side was enough to rouse many of them. In the main it was the clans hostile to the Campbells which joined most readily in the Jacobite insurrections.

It was to be expected that the exiled prince would seize the opportunity of George I.'s accession to strike a blow for his throne. The Whigs were perfectly aware that an attempt was going to be made, for they were brilliantly served by the secret service organisation maintained by Lord Stair, who was sent as ambassador to Paris, and every move of the

Pretender and his friends was quickly known to them. The Jacobite plans included a rising in the west of England. It was to be organised and led by the Duke of Ormond, who intended to seize Bristol and other ports, and to raise the Jacobite gentry in Wales as well as Western England. This was to have been the main attempt; and it was hoped that Louis XIV. would give it the support of French troops. But these plans came to nothing. The Whig leaders, fully warned, had the principal points garrisoned; Ormond had to flee from England to escape arrest; and the navy made any landing in force impossible. It was a serious blow to the cause when Louis XIV. died in 1715; for the Regent Orleans, who ruled France in the name of the infant Louis XV., was determined to maintain friendship with Britain. When the ill-fated attempt in Scotland was actually made the Regent not only gave it no help whatever, but on the request of the British ambassador he seized supplies which the Jacobites had put on board ship. Worst of all, the Pretender himself was obstinate and impracticable. He would not be persuaded that it was indispensable that he should disarm the fears of a Catholic revolution which formed the chief obstacle to success both in England and in Scotland. When Bolingbroke drafted proclamations promising security for Protestantism, James altered them with his own hand; and he actually appealed for support to the Pope and others on the express ground that his restoration would mean the triumph of the Catholic faith.

Everything therefore combined to put difficulties in the way of a successful Jacobite rising. No foreign help was to be got, even in money and arms. The rising in England, which was essential for success, was crushed before it started. The Protestant Jacobites were uneasy and alarmed. Well might Bolingbroke say that utter failure was certain. And when a rising was started, in the autumn of 1715, it was carried out in a very inefficient way. The main attempt, in the Highlands of Scotland, was led by the Earl of Mar, a Scottish noble whose unsteadiness of character was expressed in his popular nickname of 'Bobbing John.' He had been a Whig; he had at first welcomed George I., and only deserted him because he was disappointed of a post; and he was a man of no vigour, courage, or military capacity. Yet even so his insurrection caused grave alarm for a time; for the army had been so much reduced since the Peace of Utrecht that there was at first no sufficient force to deal

vigorously with him, the available troops being needed to guard against the danger of a landing by Ormond in the south.

Mar raised his standard in his own county of Aberdeenshire in September 1715. He was promptly joined by many of the clans, and by October he had occupied Perth and controlled all the central Highlands. Only the Duke of Argyll, with a very small force at Stirling, barred his way southwards. Mar's one hope lay in striking swiftly, yet he lay idle and did nothing. Meanwhile a few Jacobites in Northumberland had risen under Forster, one of the members for the county, and Lord Derwentwater; and a group of lords and gentlemen of the western Scottish border country had joined them with a few hundred men. Reinforced by a small contingent of Mar's army, this handful tried to make its way into Lancashire, where the Jacobites were supposed to be strong; but they were surrounded and forced to surrender at Preston on November 13. On the same day Mar had at last ventured to challenge a battle with Argyll, at Sheriffmuir near Dunblane, hoping to force a way south. It was a straggling, indecisive fight, though the Jacobites largely outnumbered their opponents. But after the battle Mar thought it necessary to fall back again on Perth, and with this retreat all hope of success vanished. In December the Pretender landed in Scotland. But he only arrived in time to see Mar's discouraged force withdraw northwards; his appearance and conduct chilled and disappointed his followers; and before a month was out he had deserted his adherents and fled to France. He could not, by remaining longer, have helped his cause. But his flight completed its discredit. A narrow-minded and obstinate man like his father, and at the same time sensual and faithless to his friends, the Pretender was an impossible leader for a losing cause, or even for a winning one. The remnants of Mar's army melted away, and the rebellion came to an ignominious end. On the whole the rebels were lightly punished, according to the standards of the time. Some eighty of the minor offenders were put to death, some hundreds transported to the colonies. Most of the leaders escaped; but seven nobles were impeached and found guilty, of whom four were reprieved and two, Lords Derwentwater and Kenmore, were beheaded. The seventh, Lord Nithsdale, made a romantic escape in woman's dress with the aid of his wife.

The ignominious failure of the rising of 1715 did not end

the hopes of the Jacobites. In 1718-19 they were all agog with the expectation of help on a large scale from Spain and Sweden. But the warlike King Charles XII. of Sweden, on whom their hopes were fixed, died at the critical moment (1718). A Spanish fleet fitted out to land a force in Britain was scattered by a storm before it could be seen whether the Navy would let it pass; and only two frigates with a handful of Spanish soldiers reached the mouth of Loch Duich on the wild West Highland coast (1719). A few hundred Highlanders rose to help them. But they were scattered in a fight in Glen Shiel; the Spaniards were compelled to surrender; and one more was added to the list of Jacobite fiascos. Yet another occurred in 1722, when an elaborate plot to seize the King and the Prince of Wales was discovered in London, and Atterbury, the High Church Bishop of Rochester, was banished for his share in it. Another was projected in 1727, when George I. died, but it came to less than nothing.

Thus all the Jacobite plots failed in turn. Meanwhile the unhappy Pretender had been expelled from France, and had taken refuge first at Avignon and then at Rome, where he lived on a charitable allowance from the Pope. His life was so scandalous that it forced his wife, the proud and beautiful Polish Princess Clementina Sobieski, to take refuge in a nunnery; and he sank into contempt even among his sentimental followers in England. Not until a worthier representative of the Stewart line should appear was there now any danger from this source to the Whig rule in Britain; and even so the only hope of any vigorous action was among the bold, romantic clansmen of the Scottish Highlands.

Aware of this, the Whig government gave much thought, in the years following 1725, to trying to tame the wild Highlands. They built forts at strategic points, notably Fort William and Fort Augustus, to bridle the clans. They garrisoned them with English troops, and with regiments enlisted among the more loyal Highlanders. More important, they sent General Wade to drive roads through the barren wastes, so as to make them accessible to armies; and though, as time was to show, this did not avail to prevent a further and more formidable rising in 1745, it was the beginning of the introduction of law and order into the only region in the islands where the primitive usages and the ancient loyalties of tribal society still survived.

§ 2. *The Organisation of the Whig Oligarchy.*

Once the first danger in 1715 had been overcome, it may fairly be said that the constant alarms of Jacobite conspiracies strengthened rather than weakened the ascendency of the Whigs, by seeming to justify their monopoly of power, and by discrediting the Tories. Not until Jacobitism was dead and buried could Toryism as a political creed again have a serious chance in the islands ; and it is partly to the Jacobites that the long dominance of the Whig oligarchy must be attributed. Thus the rising of 1715 gave to the Whigs the excuse for passing the Septennial Act in 1716, which prolonged the duration of Parliaments from three to seven years, and incidentally extended the life of the overwhelmingly Whig Parliament which had been elected in the first year of George I. It has often been contended that it was ' unconstitutional ' for a Parliament to prolong its own life. The precedent was never imitated until the German war of 1914-18, during which the then sitting Parliament repeatedly prolonged its own life on the ground of national necessity. That argument could equally be used in 1716. The nation needed time to settle down. And the interval gave the Whigs time to organise their own power. They made full and skilful use of the opportunity, bringing all the organs of government effectively under their control, and thus establishing what Disraeli has described as a ' Venetian oligarchy.'

In the first place they obtained control of nearly all the powers of the Crown, which were still very large. Practically the king ceased to play any important part in the direction of policy, except in foreign affairs, where his position as Elector of Hanover had an influence. Unable to speak a word of English, he ceased to attend the meetings of the cabinet ; and thus established a precedent which no subsequent king has ventured to break, apart from one or two doubtful occasions in the reign of George III. The king's place as president in the cabinet was taken by one of the ministers, who became, in effect, Prime Minister and the responsible head of government. Again, the king never ventured to veto an Act passed by both Houses of Parliament ; and thus the royal veto, which had been freely exercised by William III. and occasionally by Anne, passed into disuse. This represented a permanent change in the British constitution.

In strict law all public offices were filled on the king's nomination. All this vast patronage now fell to his ministers, and it formed the main foundation of their power. Not only the posts that involved administrative work, but an immense number of sinecures and pensions, were henceforth filled by the ministers. They were all given to sound Whigs; and as many of these posts could be held by members of Parliament, this ensured to every ministry a solid block of trustworthy votes—usually about 120, or nearly one-fourth of the House of Commons. Again, all the minor posts in the customs, the excise, the admiralty dockyards, and so forth, were ultimately at their disposal. In some constituencies the holders of these posts formed so large a proportion of the electorate that, by the simple device of making it clear that those who did not vote for government candidates would lose their billets, it was possible always to ensure the return of the government nominee. These boroughs were known as Treasury boroughs and Admiralty boroughs.

But the use of Crown patronage had even more important aspects. All officers in the navy and the army were appointed by the Crown, and government made sure that they were good Whigs, loyal to the Hanoverian establishment. The bishops and deans of the Established Church were all appointed by the Crown, as well as many holders of lesser benefices. This enabled the Whigs to ensure that the Church, which had been the bulwark of the Tories, should be gradually brought under Whig influence. At first it resulted in a sharp cleavage between the higher ranks of the clergy and the majority of the parochial clergy; but the fact that all high promotion was difficult if not impossible for men of obtrusively Tory views gradually influenced the mass of the clergy, and the process was assisted by the decay of religious ardour and the spreading of rationalist opinions which was characteristic of this period not only in England but throughout Europe. In the immensely important profession of law the same forces were at work. Every young lawyer knew that his chances of promotion to the bench or to any high legal office would be very small unless he was a sound Whig. Thus the exercise of Crown patronage was the principal foundation upon which the Whig oligarchy rested; and the distribution of this patronage formed one of the principal cares of ministers. When George III. later set himself to overthrow the oligarchy, his chief mode of attack was the resumption of Crown patronage into his own hand.

The use of the powers of the Crown also gave to the Whigs the means of getting control over local government. At the head of the local administration in each county was the lord-lieutenant of the county, nominated by the Crown. He was practically always a great Whig noble. And as he was charged with the duty of drawing up annually the list of persons suitable to be commissioned as justices of the peace, it followed that the justices also, who carried on in detail all the business of local administration, were mainly, though not wholly, Whigs.

In the House of Lords the Whigs had a standing majority even in Queen Anne's reign. It had been temporarily overthrown by the creation of twelve Tory peers in 1712. But many Tory peers quietly drifted into Whiggism after the accession of George I.; every new peer was a Whig; and the result was that the Whig ascendency in the House of Lords became absolutely secure. In order to make it safe from any possibility of attack, one group of Whigs proposed in 1719 to restrict the royal prerogative of creating new peers by what was known as the Peerage Bill. If this Bill had been passed it would have gone far to establish a close aristocracy which could only have been overthrown by violence. Fortunately it was thrown out by the wisdom of Sir Robert Walpole and the jealousy of the country gentlemen in the House of Commons, who not only valued the powers of their own House, but saw no reason why they as individuals should allow themselves to be debarred from promotion to the peerage.

The Peerage Bill, indeed, was not necessary as a means of strengthening the Whig control over the House of Lords, which was complete, or of emphasising the power and prestige of the members of that House. There was never a time when aristocratic dignity stood higher in England. Every ministry was mainly composed of peers. A very large proportion of the House of Commons was, as we shall see, composed of the nominees of peers, often their sons and cousins. For that reason the peers had no ground for objecting to the practice whereby the actual business of government was mainly carried on in the Lower House, or to the control over finance which that House jealously claimed. In effect Britain and the British Empire were governed during this period by a group of great families, some seventy in number, who were linked together by intermarriage, and who regarded themselves as having a right to the controlling voice in public affairs. To the

doctrine of the divine right of kings had succeeded the doctrine of the divine right of the great families. It is our business, in this Book, to see how that system worked; and we may say in advance that, on the whole, it did not work badly; that it contributed some ideas and traditions to British government which have been of high value; and that, though it obviously could not last very long and was bound to be overthrown, it was in many ways a useful stage in the advance towards full national self-government.

§ 3. *The House of Commons under the Whigs.*

But since the House of Commons had become the main scene of party conflict, and since its powers, especially over finance, now made it the driving wheel of the British system of government, the Whigs had to ensure their control over this house before their mastery could be effective. The mode in which the elections were managed made this not very difficult. The most independent element in the house consisted of the representatives of the English counties, two for each, who were elected by all owners of land of the value of 40s. per annum and upwards. In quiet times it was easy for a few leading magnates of the county to get their nominees returned; for a long time, it was said, the real choice of the members for Yorkshire was made in the Marquis of Rockingham's drawing-room, and so long as the nation was peaceful and prosperous the county electors were ready enough to accept such nominees. In times of excitement or crisis it was different.

But the boroughs supplied a very large majority of the members, and here it was possible to get a more direct control. The power of the Whigs very largely depended upon the assiduity with which individual Whig magnates devoted themselves to getting control over borough elections. The methods of election, being determined by local custom, varied very widely, but there were few boroughs which could not be influenced by a magnate who would take pains. Some of the boroughs had practically no population: the right of voting belonged to the owners or tenants of the land on which a borough had once existed; and in these cases it was easy to buy up the land. In other cases the franchise belonged to the occupiers of 'burgages,' that is to say, the original building plots which had been marked out when the mediæval borough was founded. If a rich man bought up the burgages, regardless of price, as the Duke of Bedford

did at Tavistock, he could usually make his tenants vote for his candidates. In other boroughs the right of voting belonged to the 'freemen,' who were admitted to the privileges of the borough for life by the corporation. These boroughs were apt to be more independent. But some of them were little places, easily influenced by the wishes of a great neighbour who troubled to pay some attention to them. The borough of Bedford, for example, had the friendly habit of asking the duke to approve lists of new freemen, and an obliging corporation might choose a batch of new freemen of the right complexion on the eve of an election. But since a freeman once appointed could not be ousted, these boroughs needed continuous attention, and were apt to be insecure at exciting elections. In other boroughs the corporation elected the members, and some corporations were not difficult to handle: for a round sum they were often prepared to accept nominations. A rich man could establish an influence by public munificence—for example, by providing a water-supply or a park for the borough at his own expense. In a few boroughs every ratepayer or every resident had a right to vote, and these were sometimes troublesome places, where bribery had to be freely employed. In all these ways the Whig magnates were able to get control over a large number of seats in the House of Commons, though they could only do so by constant attention and large expenditure.

Naturally a magnate who had eight or ten seats at his disposal expected to wield a corresponding degree of power: in return for the support he could promise to government, he looked to get offices and posts for himself and his friends. Hence there tended to grow up little groups or interests within the general body of the party, who were constantly busy in intrigues against one another, and in the later part of the period this became very marked. The owners of groups of seats were also usually anxious that their members should do them credit. They were therefore (and this was the best aspect of the system) constantly on the look-out for young men of promise, and when they found them they frequently allowed to them a surprising freedom of action. The remarkable political capacity shown by a long succession of statesmen produced during this period and the next was very largely due to this hunt for men of promise. Nearly all the great names of English politics, from the Elder Pitt to Gladstone, got their first chance of distinguishing them-

selves in this way, and were thus enabled to devote themselves to a political career while still young, without waiting till their names were made and their habits of thought fixed by the practice of other professions. The system of nomination, with all its obvious defects, did not produce bad governing assemblies, it produced unexpectedly good ones.

Nor must it be supposed that the House of Commons elected in this way was entirely venal and corrupt. Far from it. Many a man bought a pocket-borough as the best way of entering the service of his country. Many patrons of boroughs used their power with a high sense of public obligation, and with a determination to see that the best men available were brought into the service of the country. It is not at all unlikely that nomination, under the conditions of the time, produced on the whole better rulers than would have been produced by the free exercise of choice by bodies of electors who had next to no knowledge of public affairs, and very little opportunity of obtaining it. Moreover, in times of real crisis, when the mind of the nation was genuinely stirred, the power of the magnates to control elections largely disappeared, as the elections in the second half of the century were to show. Even at the height of the Whig oligarchy there was always a large body of independent members of the House of Commons not in any way tied down to support government.

We may roughly picture a Whig House of Commons as consisting of three sections. There was a body of placemen and members for government seats, approximately numbering about 120, who could nearly always be counted on to vote for the government in power for the time being, but who sometimes broke away from government control. There was a body of 'independent' members, often spoken of as 'the country gentlemen,' and largely consisting of the representatives of the counties and the larger boroughs; they were mostly Whigs, but included some Tories; they held it to be generally their duty to support the king's government, but they were always free to vote against it if they thought it was going wrong. And finally there was a body of 'nominated' members, representing 'rotten' or 'pocket' boroughs, who were nearly all Whigs, but were divided into groups supporting particular cliques among the Whig leaders and particular views of public policy.

Thus while the Whigs dominated the House of Commons, and the very name of Tory almost disappeared during the next half-century, this did not mean that the House of

Commons was robbed of all independence or freedom of action. It meant, on the contrary, that while the main Whig doctrines as to the sovereignty of Parliament and the danger of monarchical power were triumphant, every successive government continued to be in a real sense dependent upon Parliament, and could not hold its place if its views as to national policy did not recommend themselves to Parliament. And, as we shall see in a later chapter, (Chapter IX.) the parliaments of this period were far more genuinely representative of the real mind and will of the nation than the manner in which they were elected would lead us to suppose.

§ 4. *The Young Chevalier, and the Last Great Effort of the Jacobites.*

The power of the Whigs was thus rooted in a way which made it very difficult to overthrow. But the Jacobites were still to make one last effort to overturn the Whig system of government. This was the desperate and gallant rising of 1745, which was conducted with a spirit of daring that would have commanded victory had it been shown in 1715. In 1745 it was hopeless. The Whigs had enjoyed an interval of thirty years in which to establish the foundations of their power; and these had been, in the main, years of steady peace, and of such general prosperity that both England and Scotland were well content.

Two things suggested the attempt. One was that after thirty years France was once more at war with England, and French help might be hoped for. The other was that Charles Edward, the Young Chevalier,[1] son of the obstinate trifler of 1715, had grown to manhood, and was a debonair and gallant young prince of twenty-five, ready for desperate adventures and made to inspire loyal affection. The house of Stewart, which had suffered so many strange vicissitudes, played a part in so many tragedies, and inspired so much romantic devotion, was not to come to an end in mere contempt, but was to end its long story with one last heroic adventure,[2] led by a brave youth whose memory could be cherished as that of a not unworthy successor to the moving, romantic figures of Mary Queen of Scots and Charles I.

The hope of French aid came to nothing: a proposed

[1] There is a life of Prince Charles by Andrew Lang.

[2] Scott's *Waverley* gives a moving account of the rising of 1745.

French invasion of England, planned for 1744, was baffled by the strength and readiness of the navy. And it was best so: the romantic adventure which was to end the Stewart story in glorious disaster was in any case doomed to fail, and it would have lost its appeal to the imagination had it taken the form of a French invasion. The young prince set forth to conquer the islands in a little brig which he had pledged all his credit to buy and to load with muskets and broadswords and a few small field-pieces. Narrowly escaping capture by an English man-of-war, he landed at Moidart in the West Highlands, and unfurled his silken standard in Glenfinnan on August 19, 1745. Stewarts, Camerons and Macdonalds flocked to join him; and they found him a prince after their own heart. Tall, graceful and athletic, with a charm of manner that never lacked princely dignity, he wore with a gallant air the Highland dress, slept on the bare ground wrapped in his plaid, and shared all the hardships to which the men of the hills were inured. With a swiftness which compared brilliantly with the sluggishness of 1715, he marched through the Highlands by Perth straight to Edinburgh, and the bells of the Scottish capital were sounding the alarm in less than a month from his landing on the shore of Moidart. On September 17 he rode into Edinburgh; and the sheer romance of his coming, and the gallant aspect of the young prince, swept the citizens off their feet. That night there was a ball at Holyrood, the ancient palace of the Scottish kings: old Scottish ladies in the nineteenth century still remembered it with a thrill: the princely youth, heir of a hundred kings and of as many tragedies woven into the very life of Scotland, captured all hearts.

Meanwhile Sir John Cope, commander of the forces in Scotland, who had marched into the Highlands to crush the prince only to hear that he was sweeping down into the Lowlands, had hurriedly shipped his troops from Aberdeen to Dunbar and was advancing towards the capital. The Young Chevalier and his Highlanders swept down upon him at Prestonpans, four days after the ball, and, coming on him like an avalanche in the morning mist, sent him and his men flying headlong. Only 200 of 2000 escaped. Prince Charles forbade slaughter, and saw to the succour of the wounded.

This brilliant success made the desperate adventure appear to have a real chance of success. France began to think of sending a force to the prince's aid—provided that the English Jacobites would rise. But the English Jacobites would do nothing unless the prince himself came to them.

So the Highland host had to set off into England. They captured Carlisle in November. They marched down through Preston and Wigan to Manchester, where bells rang and bonfires blazed, and some two hundred volunteers joined the force. But already it was evident that there was going to be no general rising. Even Jacobite Lancashire (apart from Manchester) remained uncomfortably quiet. It was one thing to talk romantic conspiracies and drink to the health of 'the king over the water'; quite another to risk life and lands on a desperate forlorn hope. Not a single Englishman of note had joined. And meanwhile, even in Scotland, the Lowland towns, recovering from their first shock, were arming for the defence of the Protestant succession; and if Manchester was carried off its feet, Liverpool was raising troops—far more than two hundred—to fight for King George. Moreover the royal army under the king's second son, the Duke of Cumberland, was coming dangerously near. And the Highlanders were unhappy so far away from home, and were deserting in groups. The little force struggled on as far as Derby, which they reached on December 6. This was only 130 miles from London; and the news caused a veritable panic in the capital: 'Black Friday,' when there was a run on the Bank of England which could only be checked by paying out in sixpences, was long remembered.

But London had no need for alarm. The gallant effort was spent. Since there was no response from the English Jacobites, and the little Highland host was melting away, there was nothing to be done but to retreat, back to the Highlands, where alone men seemed willing to risk all for a forlorn hope. The retreat began; and the dispirited army lost its discipline, began to plunder, and found itself harassed by the country folk. Even Manchester, which had cheered the advancing army, stoned its rearguard on the retreat. On December 20 Charles was across the border again; and six days later he was in Glasgow, where Highland reinforcements began to reach him. In January a brilliant victory was won at Falkirk over a superior force of royal troops under General Hawley. But the Duke of Cumberland was coming up, and in spite of the prince's bitter expostulations, the retreat had to be continued into the fastnesses of the Highlands. Nothing but disaster lay before them; and the leaders of the retreating army added to its miseries by quarrels. On April 15, 1746, the agony was at last ended in a bitter fight at Culloden Moor, near

Nairn ; where, amid rain and snow, the hopes of the Stewart house were finally extinguished, and the last scene was enacted in the long wild drama of Highland war.

Culloden was followed by a slaughter, lasting for days after the battle, which earned for Cumberland the name of the Butcher. All the chiefs who had taken part in the rebellion were proscribed. Some of them escaped to France, some remained, hunted fugitives, among their native mountains. The prince himself spent six months in hiding, wandering with a price on his head from place to place, passing through hairbreadth escapes, trusting his life continually to peasants for whom the reward of betrayal would have meant riches, and to heroic women like Flora Macdonald, ere he succeeded in getting away in a small French vessel from the same spot where he had landed.

It was the end of a long and moving story. For the Highlands it was the end of an era ; and when, in the tender beauty of the ballads in which the memory of these deeds was enshrined, the singers lamented the brave young prince and longed for his return, it was the whole dead past that they bemoaned, and the wild romantic life of the clans, now at an end for ever. For Culloden was almost necessarily followed by the abolition of clan-government, the enforcement of ordinary law, and the repression, in some respects needlessly severe, of Highland usages and even of Highland dress. The abolition of ' heritable jurisdictions ' by an Act of 1747 was the beginning of a new era in Scottish history. In one aspect the '45 has been described as the last struggle of barbarism against civilisation : at all events it was the last struggle of the tribal system against the wider unity of the nation. For in spite of all their touching loyalty to the person of the Young Chevalier, it was for the maintenance of the old ways against the pressure of new ideas that the clansmen really if unconsciously fought, and not for a particular theory of national government. Sooner than might have been hoped, a new loyalty began to replace the old ; and, if the wild strife of the clans was gone for ever, the valour of their sons was ere long to find a new vent. Enlisted by the genius of Pitt, Highland regiments recruited from the Jacobite clans were to win at Ticonderoga, scarcely a dozen years after the ruin of Culloden, that fame of valour which they have since established in every part of the world, by deeds as gallant as ever they did under Montrose or the Young Chevalier, and of far greater value.

As for the prince, he drifted back into exile; he became a wastrel and a drunkard. What was there for him to live for? At least his degradation, unlike his father's, was always ennobled by the memory of what he had been. Nor did he wholly lose his courage or his hopes: once at least, and perhaps more often, he visited England in secret, striving to revive the lost cause which alone gave meaning to his life.[1] But there was no more to be done. The tale of the Stewarts was over, like an old song; and it was something that it had ended with deeds of gallantry that men can remember with kindling warmth.

[For the Whig system of government see Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, Robertson's *England under the Hanoverians*, Porritt's *Unreformed House of Commons*, Acton's lecture on 'The Hanoverian Settlement' in *Lectures on Modern History*; for the Jacobite risings, Terry's *The Young Pretender*, Lang's *History of Scotland* (vol. iv.), *Prince Charles Edward*, and *Pickle the Spy*.]

[1] There is a touching picture of Charles Edward as a middle-aged man revisiting the land of his ancestors in Scott's *Redgauntlet*, perhaps the finest of his novels.

CHAPTER II

BALANCE OF POWER

(A.D. 1714-1739)

§ 1. *Characteristics of the Period.*

THE twenty years following the treaties of Utrecht and Rastadt, when the Whigs were establishing their power in the islands, were a time of great complexity and confusion in the affairs of Europe. There was no central dominating interest in European history during this period, such as the wars of religion, and later the greatness and ambition of France, had earlier provided. All the innumerable despots of Europe, great and small, were each following their separate interests, and the shifts and veers of their alliances and intrigues are extremely bewildering. Into this spider's web Britain was drawn to an extent never before known, partly because she had become, as a result of the overthrow of Louis XIV., the greatest of the European powers, and partly because the position of her king as also Elector of Hanover inevitably involved her in the politics of Germany and of Northern Europe, which were the most complicated part of the web. For a time foreign politics became the chief preoccupation of British statesmen, and it may fairly be said that their principal aim was the maintenance of peace, an aim in which they were for a long time successful. It is not necessary for us to follow in any detail the tangled tale of these years. But some aspects of it are important, for new factors were emerging in this period which were in the future to be of great significance both to Europe at large and to the Commonwealth as a whole.

In the first place the political geography of Eastern and Northern Europe was being recast. The formidable Turkish empire, which had at one time seemed to threaten the civilisation of the West, was falling into decay, and giving rise to the thorny problem known as the Eastern Question; the once great monarchy of Poland had become manifestly impotent, and its destruction at the hands of its greedy

neighbours was already foreshadowed; the brief period of Swedish greatness was being brought to an end; and, rising on the ruins of these three powers, the gigantic empire of Russia was beginning to loom above the horizon of European politics.

In the second place, while no great changes took place in Western Europe, its complex politics were marked by two features of interest. On the one hand, the aspiration after some organised method of preserving peace received open expression and was widely discussed; on the other, the co-operation of the old rivals, Britain and France, the beginning of international arbitration by these powers and the holding of frequent congresses to remove causes of controversy by discussion, not only gave to Europe a long interval of peace, but showed that the maintenance of peace by international co-operation was not wholly impracticable.

§ 2. *The Decay of Turkey, Poland and Sweden, and the Rise of Russia.*

During the years when Western Europe had been wholly engrossed by the struggle against Louis XIV. (1688-1714), highly significant changes had been taking place in Eastern Europe, and the influence of these changes made itself seriously felt in the general European situation after 1714, and has made itself felt ever since.

The first of these was the decay of the power of the Turks, the beginning of which we have already noted (Book V. Chapter II.). The war against the Turkish power in Hungary had been ended by the treaty of Carlowitz in 1699, which drove the Turks beyond the Danube. They renewed the struggle in 1715, hoping to find the Habsburgs exhausted by the war against Louis XIV.; but they only lost still further territory. After the treaty of Passarowitz in 1718 the Turks were never again able seriously to threaten any of the Christian powers in Europe, and the time was soon to come when the chief importance of Turkey would arise from her weakness, and from the rivalry of her great neighbours, eager to succeed to the control of her decaying empire.

The second great change which confronted European statesmen in 1714 was that Poland, hitherto accounted one of the great States of Europe, had fallen into helpless weakness. We have seen (Book V. Chapter II.) how gallant a part the Poles had played, under John Sobieski, in stemming the Turkish peril and saving Vienna itself from capture

(1683). But already in Sobieski's time and before it Poland had been terribly weakened by her absurd system of government. Her kings were elected; and this meant that they had no firmly established authority; their powers and their resources diminished with every successive election. This would not have mattered had there been other effective organs of government. But the Polish Diet or Parliament (which consisted entirely of nobles) was the most preposterously ineffective body that has ever claimed to rule a country. Its decisions had to be unanimous; and a single obstinate member could render all its proceedings futile. Besides this, the country was deeply divided between Catholics and Protestants, and hampered by the jealousies of rival noble houses. When the great Sobieski died in 1696 these jealousies prevented the election of his son, or of any Polish noble, as king. A foreigner, Augustus the Elector of Saxony, was chosen as king. During his reign (which lasted until 1733) the unhappy country was dragged into a miserable war to which we shall have to allude later; a rival king, Stanislas Lesczinski, was set up (1704) by the formidable Swedish conqueror, Charles XII. of Sweden; and the country became the helpless prey of foreign armies and domestic factions, from which it seemed to be quite unable to defend itself. Henceforth, though still one of the biggest States of Europe on the map, Poland was regarded with mere contempt by its neighbours, and only their mutual jealousies delayed its destruction, which was to be brought about before the end of the century.

While Poland decayed, a new great power had suddenly emerged in the East: the Russian Empire, which had hitherto counted for nothing in the life of Europe. The appearance of Russia as a European power of importance dates from the accession of the vigorous, brutal and masterful barbarian, Peter the Great (1689-1725). While the war between William III. and Louis XIV. was raging in the West Peter was violently forcing his unwilling subjects to adopt Western methods, was organising an army and the beginnings of a navy, was visiting the West *incognito* in order to learn the secrets of its civilisation, and working with his own hands in the dockyards at Deptford and in Holland, and was bringing in Western advisers of all kinds (mostly Germans) to aid him in dragging Russia out of barbarism and forcing her to turn her eyes westwards. Keenly interested in naval matters, Peter realised that Russia could never become a great power till she had access to

more open waters than the ice-bound White Sea.[1] But the Turks held all the northern shores of the Black Sea; the Swedes held Finland and the lands known as the Baltic Provinces (Ingria, Esthonia, Livonia); the Poles held Courland, while the vast area of Poland was interposed between Russia and Central Europe. If Russia was to be brought into living contact with Europe, it seemed that she must advance at the expense of these powers—Turkey, Sweden and Poland.

Peter's first attack was directed against the Turks, and in 1696 he gained a brilliant if temporary success by the capture of Azof on the sea of that name; this was the beginning of the age-long conflict between Russia and Turkey. But an outlet on the Baltic would be far more valuable than an outlet on the Black Sea, the mouth of which was barred by Constantinople. In 1699, therefore, Peter eagerly became a party to an alliance which included Denmark and Poland, the ancient foes of Sweden, with the object of seizing the chance of destroying the Swedish power which seemed to be presented by the accession of a boy-king, Charles XII.[2] But the allies found they had no easy task before them; for Charles XII.—only seventeen when the war began—showed himself to be one of the most superb, daring and romantic fighting leaders in all history; and the war thus lightly and greedily started was to last for twenty-one years.

We cannot attempt to follow its extraordinary course, or to narrate Charles XII.'s incredible achievements. He crushed Denmark with a single blow (1700); he routed Peter the Great's host of 60,000 at Narva with one-eighth of their numbers (1700); he overran and conquered all Poland and set up a king of his own, a Polish noble, Stanislas Lesczinski (1704); he invaded Russia and Saxony in turn, and the Duke of Marlborough himself had to travel into Saxony to secure the neutrality of this marvellous youth of twenty-five in the war against Louis XIV. He had raised Sweden to a higher position than she had ever held; and if he had been content to make peace at this moment, the history of Europe might have been different, for (to name nothing else) Poland might have been saved from ruin. Unhappily Charles allowed himself to be drawn into a dangerous campaign in the heart of Russia; and there, at the

[1] See the maps, Atlas, Plates 9 and 26 (*a*); Plate 26 (*a*) is useful for all this section.

[2] There is a life of Charles XII., by R. Nisbet Bain, in the Heroes of the Nations Series.

battle of Pultawa (1709), the gallant but exhausted Swedes were overwhelmed. Charles had to take refuge in Turkey, where he stirred up the Turks to attack the Russians, with the result that they regained Azof.

The defeat at Pultawa revived at once the hostile league which Charles XII.'s early successes had broken up. During his absence in Turkey the Danes attacked Sweden, with little success; King Stanislas became helpless in Poland, and the foreign and disastrous rule of Augustus of Saxony was restored; Peter the Great conquered the Baltic Provinces, which remained unchallenged parts of the Russian Empire until 1917, and Finland, which he soon had to return. Russia had reached open water on the Baltic; and Peter began to build Petrograd, 'the eye through which Russia looks out upon Europe.'

The Swedes were waging their desperate war against a ring of foes when George I. succeeded to the British thrones. And shortly before his succession George had, as Elector of Hanover, practically joined in the combination against Sweden, in order to get possession of the bishoprics of Bremen and Verden,[1] which Sweden had held since the Thirty Years' War. Thus Britain found herself indirectly involved in the northern war because of her sovereign's continental possessions, over which she had no control. And the young hero, Charles XII., who returned from his exile in Turkey to direct the defence of his native land a few weeks after George's landing in England, was naturally and inevitably turned into a supporter of the Jacobite cause, and promised his help for a landing which was perhaps only prevented by his death in 1718.

In 1715, Swedish privateers were seizing numerous British ships in the Baltic; British fleets had to be sent to safeguard trade interests in these waters, and their mere presence loaded the scales against unhappy Sweden. These episodes showed how difficult were the relations created by the link with Hanover, over whose policy the British government and Parliament could exercise no control; they seemed to justify Bolingbroke's opposition to the Hanoverian succession. It was difficult to maintain a real neutrality under such circumstances; and though the Whig ministers were resolved to avoid war with Sweden if possible, they found themselves involved in great difficulties. After Charles XII.'s death, indeed, British influence was ranged on the side of Sweden; a British fleet joined the Swedish fleet to protect Stockholm

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 9.

from the danger of a Russian attack; and there was for a moment even a possibility of war with Russia: only the fear of the British navy compelled Peter the Great to be reasonable. It was largely by British mediation that Sweden was enabled to make a series of treaties with one after another of her ring of foes, the last of them being the treaty of Nystadt (1721), whereby the Baltic Provinces were formally ceded to Russia. This treaty may be said to mark the moment when Sweden, after her brilliant century of greatness, sank to the level of a third-rate power.

The treaty of Nystadt marked the emergence of Russia as a power of the first rank, and henceforth that vast, half-barbaric State had always to be counted with as a factor of importance in European affairs. This was in itself a fact of great moment, especially in conjunction with the downfall of Sweden and the hopeless weakness and disorganisation of Poland, the two States which might have held Russia in check. These events were of the deepest concern to Europe and to the British Commonwealth. But at the moment what made these events important to Britain was that they showed how much she must henceforth be involved in the concerns of Europe; that they demonstrated the high value of sea-power, the mere existence of which, without any use of force, first of all checked Charles XII.'s project of helping the Jacobites, and later compelled Peter the Great to act with greater moderation than he would naturally have shown; and finally that they showed how British policy might be hampered and complicated by the connexion with Hanover.

§ 3. *The Franco-British Alliance for the Maintenance of Peace.*

Meanwhile in the west and south the political situation had been transformed by the death of Louis XIV.; and out of the settlement of Utrecht, which was to have brought peace to the world, new problems and difficulties had arisen which kept Europe constantly on the verge of war. The equilibrium of the continent was precarious; and in the judgment of the statesmen of the age peace could only be maintained by an anxious and watchful attention to the 'balance of power.' Perhaps, as things then were, they were right: in the confused and unhealthy condition of Europe, there was a strong temptation to the despots who

were the masters of almost all the States to seize opportunities for extending their power.

After the treaty of Utrecht one of the diplomats who had taken part in the Congress, the Abbé de St. Pierre, had published a *Project of a Treaty to Secure Permanent Peace*, which expressed the weariness of unending warfare felt by many of the best men. St. Pierre urged that all States should combine in a league to maintain peace, by means of a permanent congress of ambassadors who would settle all disputes by arbitration. It was a noble dream; and during the next eighty years it inspired a long discussion in which great thinkers like Leibniz, Voltaire, Rousseau and Kant speculated upon the possibility of maintaining lasting peace by agreement among the nations. But as things were it could be no more than a dream, firstly because it was futile to expect that the four hundred absolute monarchs, great and small, who controlled the destinies of Europe would ever consent to have their ambitions checked by such a body, or deal faithfully with it if it was formed; and secondly because the root principle of such a system would have to be the maintenance of the existing division of territories, and the defence of every despot against the loss of his power; and this would have been to give an unhealthy permanence to an unnatural state of things. There could be no 'League of Nations' until the divisions of States followed the natural lines of national divisions, and this was very far from being the case.

As things were, the only chance of maintaining peace seemed to lie in maintaining the 'balance of power'—that is to say, in preventing any State from imagining that it could profit by the unsettlement which wars bring. The Whig statesmen of this age were firm believers in 'the balance of power,' and it is fair to say that, in pursuing it, they helped to give to Europe, or to the greater part of Europe, a longer interval of peace than she had yet enjoyed during the modern age.

On Louis XIV.'s death his successor was his infant great-grandson, Louis XV., a child so frail that he was expected to die. The next heir in the strict line of succession would be Philip V., King of Spain, whose succession was forbidden by the treaty of Utrecht, but who refused to recognise the validity of his exclusion. The real ruler of France was the Regent, the Duke of Orleans, who, being descended from a brother of Louis XIV., would have a claim to the throne if Philip were excluded. It was therefore to the interest of the

Regent that the treaty of Utrecht should be maintained, and for that reason he was anxious to make friends with Britain, and to join in upholding the treaty.

As soon as the failure of the Jacobite rising had made it clear that the new king was secure on his throne, the Regent therefore opened negotiations, which led to the conclusion of a Triple Alliance (January 1717) between Britain, France and the Dutch for the maintenance of the treaty of Utrecht. The friendship thus established between France and Britain formed the chief factor in European politics for twenty years, and the principal means of preserving peace. It was equally advantageous to both sides, and it assisted the remarkable development of French as well as of British trade which marked this period. Britain and France, acting in conjunction, were in fact able to check or overawe every possible disturber of the peace in Western Europe.

Yet from the first there was opposition to this policy, notably in France, where the 'Spanish' party was always able to make itself heard. In each country there were men who felt that the national interests were being subordinated to those of the nation's chief trade rival. And in France, as the boy-king outgrew his weakness, the original motive for the alliance grew weaker, and the party which wanted to revive the policy of Louis XIV. in close alliance with Spain became more influential at court. The experiment of friendly co-operation between France and Britain, useful as it was, was not likely to have a very long life.

The sources of disturbance during these years were the two powers which were dissatisfied with the settlement at Utrecht, Spain and Austria. At first Spain was the chief disturbing factor. She had undergone a real revival of vigour under the influence of the French administrators brought in by Louis XIV. Under the guidance of an able minister, Cardinal Alberoni, she was not only building up her trade and industry but creating a navy and preparing for war. Her first object was to regain her lost Italian possessions, which the settlement of 1713-14 had given to Austria. But the obstacle to Alberoni's ambitious schemes was the alliance of Britain and France to maintain the treaty settlement. He tried to stir up faction in France. He took up the cause of the English Jacobites, and prepared to send a big expedition to support a landing by Ormond. He subsidised the Turks against Austria, and stimulated a revolt in Hungary. He endeavoured to make an alliance both with Sweden and with Russia

for a joint attack upon Britain. All Europe was to be thrown into confusion, and a general war might have resulted.

The Franco-British alliance checked all these restless plans. The Triple Alliance was expanded into the Quadruple Alliance (1718) by the inclusion of Austria. British mediation helped to bring about the conclusion of the Austro-Turkish war in the treaty of Passarowitz. And when Alberoni, persisting in his schemes, proceeded to attack Sicily, a British fleet practically destroyed the infant Spanish navy in the battle of Cape Passaro, off the Sicilian coast, while a French army invaded Spain. In the end Alberoni had to be dismissed (1719); and a settlement was arrived at whereby two Italian duchies were given to the Spanish queen's son, and the Duke of Savoy was persuaded to hand over Sicily to Austria, taking Sardinia in exchange; the Habsburg claim to the Spanish crown, which had never been dropped, being finally abandoned. A general war had been averted by the Franco-British alliance, and by the naval strength of Britain, which made a Spanish attack on Italy futile.

This danger was no sooner averted than a new one arose. Both Spain and Austria were still unsatisfied. Spain was angry at the British possession of Gibraltar and Minorca. Austria was annoyed at the arrangement by which the chief 'barrier' towns of the Netherlands (Austrian since the treaty of Utrecht) were garrisoned by Dutch troops. The Emperor was also anxious to develop the foreign trade of the Netherlands, and he had founded at Ostend a trading company whose activities were jealously regarded by the English and the Dutch.

In 1725 the two restless and aggrieved States whose differences had nearly led to war and were then being laboriously adjusted at a European congress at Cambrai, suddenly made friends, in what is known as the treaty of Vienna. Spain undertook to give special facilities for trade in the Indies to the Ostend Company. Austria undertook to help in the reconquest of Gibraltar and Minorca. More than once Britain had expressed her willingness to negotiate about Gibraltar, to which little importance was then attached, but the demand for its retrocession at the pistol's mouth was not to be tolerated. Once again Spain became the centre of a coalition against Britain, and detailed plans were drawn up for a Jacobite invasion; and once again the party in France which was hostile to the British alliance

began to be active. There was feverish negotiation in all the courts of Europe during 1726 and 1727.

But the Franco-British alliance held, and it was supplemented (in the treaty of Hanover) by an agreement with Prussia (1725), which the Dutch and other powers subsequently joined. A British fleet was sent to blockade the Spanish treasure-fleet in Porto Bello: without the millions which it was bringing, no war could be waged by Spain, and the blockading squadron succeeded in preventing its sailing. Another British fleet was sent to cruise off the coast of Spain. Meanwhile the Spaniards had begun the attack on Gibraltar (February 1727)—the second siege which that fortress had undergone since its capture in 1704. But an attack from the landward side while the British fleet commanded the seas was hopeless, and after four months the siege was abandoned. The Emperor saw that a war promised no advantage, and agreed to refer his grievances to a congress, which deliberated for months at Soissons. Spain remained sulky, though in the end she came to an agreement with the allies at Seville (1729).

§ 4. *The Gradual Rupture of the Franco-British Alliance and the Question of Poland.*

Once again the Franco-British alliance and British sea-power had prevented the outbreak of what might have developed into a general war. But the alliance was beginning to be strained. It was being strained by the naval and commercial preponderance of Britain, which was also (together with the possession of Gibraltar), the chief source of Spanish unrest. Britain professed her willingness to negotiate regarding Gibraltar on the basis of an interchange: Florida had been earlier suggested as an equivalent. But the Spaniards would not hear of equivalents; and meanwhile Gibraltar had become, thanks to the sieges, an object of pride to the British peoples: any notion of surrendering it, as Lord Townshend said in 1728, 'would be sufficient to put the whole nation in a flame.'

Already there were ominous indications that the common resentment of France and Spain against the overwhelming sea-power of Britain would bring about an alliance between the two Bourbon powers. Already jealousy between Britain and France was becoming acute; and was being stirred up by the opposition parties in both countries. The two governments were quarrelling about the demolition of the

fortifications of Dunkirk, which had been promised by France in the treaty of Utrecht; they were disputing also about the persecution of Protestants which was still going on in France. More important disputes were rising about the erection of French forts in the Mississippi, about the boundaries of the province of Acadia, ceded by France in 1714, and about the ownership of West Indian islands. In 1730 the two nations agreed to settle the fate of the island of St. Lucia by arbitration—perhaps the first resort to this method of settling differences in modern history. But, as we shall see in the next chapter, the trading and colonial interests of Britain and France, as well as of Britain and Spain, were clashing at too many points to make a friendly agreement easy. The upholders of friendship and alliance, Sir Robert Walpole in Britain and Cardinal Fleury in France, were losing ground year by year; year by year the imperialist groups in each country, William Pitt and his friends in Britain, Belleisle and his group in France, were becoming more aggressive.

In 1733 an event happened which, though it might appear to have no relation with the affairs of the western powers, nevertheless brought these tendencies to a head. Augustus of Saxony, King of Poland, died: and the question of the succession to the Polish throne agitated Europe. This, it might have been supposed, was a question for the Poles to decide. And Polish national feeling was all in favour of the election of Stanislas Lesczinski, who had for a time held the Polish throne under the protection of Charles XII. of Sweden. The succession of Lesczinski, who was himself a Pole, might have saved Poland from ruin by reviving the national spirit of the country and rescuing it from its dependence on foreign courts; and all good Polish patriots supported him. But for this precise reason Poland's great neighbours, Russia and Austria, were opposed to his succession. They wanted to keep Poland weak and helpless; and they declared for the candidature of the son of the late king, Augustus III., Elector of Saxony.

If the Franco-British alliance had remained firm, and had given its support to the Polish national candidate, Poland might have been saved from the ruin which subsequently befell her. But the British feeling was that British interests were not concerned in Poland, and Walpole refused to take any part in the war. 'Madam, there are fifty thousand men slain this year in Europe,' he said to the queen, who was in favour of intervening, 'and not

one Englishman.' It was a legitimate boast, and represents one of the strongest arguments for a pacific policy. Yet, looking at the question from a broadly European point of view, there were strong arguments in favour of helping the resuscitation of Poland, whose final downfall was ensured by the war. And it was also clear that British abstention helped to precipitate the gradually growing cleavage between Britain and France.

For France had decided to take the part of Lesczinski, partly because Louis XV. had married his daughter, partly from a desire to establish French influence in Poland as a barrier against the House of Austria; this was indeed a traditional French policy. And, looking about for allies in an attack on Austria, France turned to Spain, who, caring nothing about Poland, was eager to seize Austrian lands in Italy. In 1733 a secret treaty was made between the two Bourbon powers, the first of three such agreements to which the name of 'Family Compacts' has been given. The two kings pledged themselves to eternal friendship, and guaranteed one another's possessions in Europe and elsewhere. They promised one another mutual trade concessions. They annulled all previous treaties affecting their relations—including the treaty of Utrecht. And France promised that Spain should have all conquests made in Italy, and undertook to help her to regain Gibraltar. But not a word about Poland. Obviously this treaty (which was broken almost as easily as it was signed) was aimed principally against Britain; and it marks the real end of the Franco-British alliance which had hitherto preserved European peace.

The terms of the Family Compact showed that France really cared little about Poland. And in fact the War of the Polish Succession was mainly fought in Italy, against Austria. No effective help was given to the unfortunate Poles, though they gathered in Dantzic, the chief Polish port, in the hope of French aid from the sea. When it came, it was too late to be of any avail. Russia and Austria placed their candidate on the Polish throne; and henceforth Russian and Austrian (especially Russian) influence was predominant in Poland, which lay a helpless victim before its future plunderers. When the war was ended, in 1735, by the mediation of Britain and the Dutch, the subordination of Poland to Russia and Austria was accepted as an established fact, and the only important provisions in the final treaty (1738) related to Italy and the West. Louis XV. got for his father-

in-law, the ex-king Stanislas, the duchy of Lorraine; so he was provided for, and dynastic interests were safeguarded while Poland was left to the wolves. When Stanislas died (as he did in 1766) Lorraine was to go to France; so France had gained something. Austria gave up Naples and Sicily to a Spanish Bourbon prince; so the Bourbons were provided with a third European kingdom, which they kept till Italy became an united realm. Austria got the northern Italian duchies of Parma and Piacenza for herself, and the duchy of Tuscany for the Duke of Lorraine, who was soon to marry the heiress of the Austrian dominions. More important, the Emperor, who had no male heir, and had been for years collecting signatures to a 'Pragmatic Sanction' guaranteeing the succession of his daughter Maria Theresa to all his lands, got the signatures of France and Spain, having earlier obtained those of nearly every other European power. Everybody was pleased.

But Poland's ruin was assured. And the grouping of the European allies which had hitherto preserved an uneasy peace was broken. And Spain and France were preparing to join forces in a great struggle with Britain for maritime and colonial supremacy. The era of unrestful and precarious balance of power was over; the struggle for leadership in the non-European world was about to begin.

[The period is covered by A. Hassall, *The Balance of Power*. See also Mahan's *Influence of Sea-Power upon History*; Chance's *George I. and the Northern War*; Nisbet Bain's *Scandinavia*, his *Charles XII.*, his *The First Romanovs*, and his *Pupils of Peter the Great*; Waliszewski's *Peter the Great* (Eng. trans.); Rambaud's *History of Russia* (Eng. trans.); Lane-Poole's *Turkey*; Hume's *Spain*; Muir's *Nationalism and Internationalism*; Armstrong's *Elizabeth Farnese*; Acton's lecture on 'the Hanoverian Succession' in *Lectures on Modern History*.]

CHAPTER III

TRADE AND COLONIAL RIVALRY

(A.D. 1714-1739)

§ 1. *Exaggerated Expectations from Tropical Trade.*

We have seen in the last chapter that trading and colonial jealousies were bringing about an increasing friction between Britain on the one side and both Spain and France on the other; and since these jealousies were soon to bring about a tremendous and world-wide conflict, it is needful to understand their causes and their development.

Nothing was more obvious to Europe, at the end of the struggle against Louis XIV., than that foreign trade was an inexhaustible source of wealth and strength to a nation: it seemed plain to all that the triumphant position of the maritime powers, and especially of England, was primarily due to this cause. Even more eagerly than in the previous era, the European peoples set themselves to secure the wealth which could be derived from over-sea trade, especially with the tropics. Thus the Emperor himself, as we have seen, set on foot the Ostend Company in the hope of getting some of this wealth; and opportunities for tropical trade were some of the chief subjects of negotiation in every successive treaty, from that of Utrecht with its Asiento appendix to the treaty between Spain and Austria of 1725 and the Family Compact of 1733. It was not territory that men aimed at, but trade: practically no new colonies were established by any of the powers during this period, with the exception of the French settlement at New Orleans (1717) and the English colony of Georgia (1733).

Highly exaggerated ideas were entertained as to the amount of profit that could be earned from tropical trade; and these ideas were fostered and encouraged by the evidence which the last generation had afforded of the way in which the organised co-operative use of capital, and the employment of national credit, could be made to produce wealth. We have already seen how the Bank of England and the great trading companies had enabled Britain to bear easily

the burden of great wars, while at the same time immensely extending her trading activities; and the same methods had been pursued in other countries, notably in Holland. Men were discovering the power of capital and credit, and (like many people in our own days) they attributed to them a sort of magical quality, a power of making wealth by themselves; not realising that wealth can only be increased by the expenditure of work in making desirable things available for use, and that capital and credit can only add to wealth in so far as they help in this process.

Because of these exaggerated ideas the early part of the eighteenth century was a period of wild speculation, especially in France and England; and though the speculative madness ranged over the whole field of commerce and industry, it was most unrestrained in regard to enterprises directed towards tropical trade. In France a brilliant and sanguine Scotsman, John Law, conceived a grandiose scheme for bringing the whole of the foreign trade of France, and all her colonies, under the control of a single great company, which was to be linked with a huge national banking organisation, and the two together were to relieve the State of the whole burden of the national debt, and were to take over the collection of taxes. The expectation of immense profits from the East and West Indies, and from the new colony of Louisiana (founded in 1717) led people to invest lavishly in these schemes. But the trade could not possibly provide the profits necessary for satisfying these expectations, and though Law in carrying out his system made many useful economic reforms, greatly reduced the national burden of debt, and gave a remarkable stimulus to French trade abroad, his projects ended in an appalling financial crash in 1720.

Almost at the same moment a similar speculative mania broke out in England. It was due to a scheme far less ambitious than Law's, but resting, like his, upon a wholly fictitious idea of the profits to be made from tropical trade. The South Sea Company had been founded by the Tories in Queen Anne's reign partly to take over a large amount of floating debt, and partly to provide a makeweight to the Bank of England. In 1720 the company offered to take over the bulk of the National Debt, to accept a lower rate of interest upon it from government, and either to give to the holders of the debt South Sea stock instead, or to buy them out. This arrangement was undoubtedly advantageous to government, since it reduced very largely the burden

of interest on the debt. But the amazing thing was that everybody became wildly eager to obtain South Sea stock, partly owing to the notion that there was something magical about public credit, partly owing to the universally exaggerated idea of the profits to be made from the South Sea trade. In reality this trade could not possibly yield profits high enough even to cover the difference between the higher and the lower rate of interest on the debt, still less to pay additional profits to those debt-holders who took South Sea stock in exchange. Yet for a time South Sea stock rose to ten times its value, and the company promised dividends of fifty per cent. The speculative mania thus started extended into all sorts of other spheres, and a host of bubble companies were started, for the most preposterous purposes. There could be only one end to this : a huge crash, which came within a few months of the launching of the scheme. Thousands of people were ruined ; a few made colossal fortunes out of speculation. Parliament had to take the matter up ; and Sir Robert Walpole made his reputation by the skill in which he dealt with the problem.

The details of these schemes do not concern us. Neither Law's projects nor the South Sea Bubble had any permanent influence upon the course of trade, except, perhaps, by teaching men caution. But they show how eager this generation was to make money, and how convinced it was that vast amounts of money were to be made out of colonial and tropical trade. And the popular belief had thus much of justification, that undoubtedly the wealth made by oversea trade in this period was beyond all comparison greater than it had ever been before.

§ 2. *The Chief Spheres of Tropical Trade : the Slave-Trade and the Great Triangle.*

In the far Eastern trade the Dutch still had the upper hand, and the other western nations did little traffic beyond the straits of Malacca. In Indian trade all the nations had their share, and this was undoubtedly a period of growing activity, though it was hampered by the political disorganisation into which India was falling. The English East India Company, in particular, had made a very advantageous arrangement (1717) with the Mogul and with the Nawab who ruled Bengal, whereby their goods for export were freed from all customs duties in Bengal ; and as a consequence their settlement at Calcutta had risen

from a village to be a thriving city of 100,000 souls —nearly all, of course, Indians. The French East India Company, reorganised after the collapse of Law's schemes, was also doing profitable business, especially in the later part of the period, though it was quite unable to rival the English company. But, prosperous as the period was, the East India trade was not yet bringing any very great stream of wealth into Britain and France. Indeed, as we have seen, it was regarded with a good deal of distrust at home, because, since there was as yet no great sale for European goods in the Indian market, the Indian goods brought to Europe had to be paid for largely in gold and silver. India was, in fact, then as always since, a sponge for the precious metals, sucking them in only to hoard or bury them, and thus making little or no use of her accumulated wealth for the creation of fresh wealth: that is one of the reasons why India was and is a poor country, in spite of her great resources.

It was not therefore in any large degree the Eastern trade which in this period was exciting Europe by dreams of wealth, but mainly what we may call the Atlantic trade. The islands of the West Indies were producing sugar in ever-increasing quantities—cotton also, and tobacco, but mainly sugar; and all Europe was eager to buy the sugar at high prices. It was purchased chiefly by the produce of the English and French manufactures. This lucrative trade was therefore largely in the hands of the French and the English, and during this period its principal feature was the remarkable success and prosperity of the French sugar islands, San Domingo, Martinique and Guadeloupe,[1] which were rapidly distancing their English rivals. This seems to have been due to the greater efficiency of French methods. The severity of the French competition was causing a good deal of alarm in England, though the English islands were prosperous also. And one disturbing feature was that the New England colonies, which had developed a large shipping trade, were resorting to the French islands, and buying cargoes of French sugar, molasses or rum in exchange for their fish, timber and other products. As this, though not contrary to the Navigation Acts, was in conflict with the principle of inter-imperial trade which inspired the British system, an attempt was made to deal with it in 1733 by what was known as the Molasses Act, which imposed prohibitive duties on French molasses

[1] See the map of West Indies, Atlas, Plate 53.

imported into the North American colonies. This Act was of quite a different character from earlier trade Acts affecting the colonies. Its aim was to encourage the British West Indian settlements, and to make the empire economically self-sufficient; and it involved the levying of duties in New England. Though its validity was not seriously questioned, it was deeply resented in New England, because it interfered with a very profitable traffic; and the Molasses Act undoubtedly contributed to produce that irritation in New England which led in the end to the dissolution of the first British Empire.

In addition to the direct trade between the home countries and their own West India Islands, there was a large trade with Spanish America. Britain had secured, by the Asiento Treaty, a monopoly of this trade so far as it was recognised by the Spanish government, and these privileges were exercised by the South Sea Company. But they amounted to little: apart from the monopoly of the import of negro slaves, the company was only permitted to send one ship of 500 tons annually to the Spanish dominions. The capacity of the one ship was illegitimately expanded by reloading it at sea. But even so the volume of the trade was small—far too small to satisfy the wants of the Spanish colonists. Hence a wholesale system of smuggling grew up, in which all the nations took part, though the British were probably the most active.

Smuggling was, of course, a breach of Spanish law, and the wholesale scale on which it was carried on aroused a natural resentment in Spain. But in attempting to exclude all foreign trade save what could be carried in one annual ship, the Spanish government was attempting the impossible. No other country imposed such extravagant restraints. As it was manifestly impossible to guard effectively the whole coastline of the Spanish mainland and islands, Spain attempted to check the smuggling trade by the wholly illegitimate method of sending out coastguard vessels to stop and search trading ships on the high seas. The right of search even in time of war was a doubtful one under international law; in time of peace its exercise was certainly illegitimate. From these searches British vessels especially suffered, partly because of the growing irritation of Spain against Britain. The searches were often carried out with great brutality, and lurid tales were brought home by shipmasters which aroused indignation in Britain. The

most famous of these tales was that of Captain Jenkins, whose ear had been cut off in a fray provoked by a Spanish coastguard search. He brought the severed ear home in cotton-wool; and its production in the House of Commons at a critical moment helped to precipitate the war with Spain which began in 1739. Thus between Spain and Britain there was acute and growing friction, and irritation on both sides—a state of things which was almost bound to lead to war.

Closely linked both with the trade of the West Indian islands and with the trade of Spanish America was the negro trade of the West African coast, for all these lands depended upon this iniquitous traffic for their labour supply. Every trading country took part in it: the French, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, even the Prussians. But the most active were the English slave-traders, among whom a large number of New England traders were included: the New Englanders carried many of the slaves required for the southern British colonies, Virginia and the Carolinas.

The whole coast of West Africa, from Cape Blanco to Angola, was dotted with European slaving-stations.[1] There was no attempt to settle or administer territory in West Africa. The slaves were supplied by tribal chiefs on the coast, who made their livelihood by organising slave-raids into the interior to meet the demands of the European traders; and it is impossible to exaggerate the amount of misery inflicted by this hideous system upon large areas of the African hinterland. Yet no one felt any qualms about this traffic. All the nations regarded it as perfectly legitimate, and as absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the American plantations, The British African Company was described as 'the most beneficial to this island of all the companies that ever were formed by our merchants.' It may serve as an illustration of the total absence of misgivings about the legitimacy of the slave-trade that John Newton, the evangelical divine, the friend of Cowper and the author of 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds' and many other favourite hymns, was for some years after his religious conversion the captain of a slave-ship.

Down to 1698 the British slave-trade had been centred in London. In the early part of the eighteenth century the predominance passed to Bristol. But from about 1730 onwards the rising port of Liverpool rapidly got the upper

[1] See the map of West Africa, Atlas, Plate 64 (*c*).

hand, and by the middle of the century its merchants were the most active slave-traders in the world. This change was important. It meant that the growing industry of the Lancashire towns was finding a new market. A great part of the wealth which went to build up the immense prosperity of Lancashire in the second half of the century, and to make the Industrial Revolution possible, was derived from the slave-trade and the trade with the West Indies which was linked with it.

There has probably never been a more lucrative line of trade in the world, on any large scale, than the 'Great Triangle' followed by the European merchants engaged in this traffic. In swift clippers specially built for the trade, they took out cargoes of cheap and gaudy cloths, beads, muskets and gin to West Africa; they exchanged them, at an immense profit, for cargoes of negroes; they sold these in the West Indian or American markets at very high prices; and they returned with their ships' holds full of sugar, tobacco and cotton, which were always sure of a good market at home. It was this traffic which made the South Sea trade appear to promise profits of unimaginable dimensions; and all the European trading nations strove to get as large a share in it as possible.

§ 3. *North American Trade, and Franco-British Rivalry.*

The total volume of the trade between Europe and the West Indies and West Africa was very much greater than that between Europe and the North American continent. But in the American trade British traders had an immeasurable advantage over all competitors. By the middle of the century there were about a million and a half of settlers in the thirteen British colonies, all engaged mainly in producing raw materials—timber, tar, and other naval stores as well as agricultural produce in New England and the Middle Colonies; furs bought from the Indians in New York; tobacco in Virginia and Maryland; rice in South Carolina. The most valuable of these commodities, under the Navigation Acts, could be exported only to Britain, and although the Acts were evaded, undoubtedly the bulk of colonial produce followed the line which they laid down. Moreover all these numerous and prosperous settlers bought nearly all the manufactured goods they wanted from Britain, for their own manufactures were as yet on the smallest scale.

Compared with this great volume of trade, the French North American colonies yielded very little. Canada had practically nothing to offer save furs, and her small and poor population provided but little market for French manufactures. The colony of Louisiana, founded in 1717—its capital, New Orleans, got its name from the French regent—had aroused glowing hopes at the time of Law's gigantic schemes. But its population was not more than some 5000; and though the French were, with immense energy, planting little forts and trading stations during this period up the line of the Mississippi, these isolated posts, hundreds of miles apart, in an almost unpeopled land, could support little trade of value.

But during this period, though they drew little profit from North America, the French were showing very great activity in marking out a great future of imperial development. They held the two chief natural lines of communication which open up the heart of the American continent, the line of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, running roughly east and west, and the line of the Mississippi and Missouri, running roughly north and south;[1] and these two lines practically made a junction by way of Lake Michigan and the river Illinois. They enclosed within a huge triangle the whole of the British colonies, which hugged the coast, nowhere extended more than about one hundred miles in depth, and were shut in by the confused and wooded hill country of the Alleghanies. If the French could get control also of the valley of the Ohio, which runs close behind the Alleghany chain, and links up the lower lakes, Erie and Ontario, with the Mississippi, the British colonies would be deprived of all possibility of expansion.

The French, thanks to the daring of their explorers, had grasped this vast geographical conception; neither the British government at home nor the British colonists had yet visualised it. But it was impossible that a small, poor and thinly scattered body of Frenchmen should be able permanently to exclude from these immense areas the prosperous and enterprising settlers in the British colonies, who outnumbered them now by at least twenty to one. Once the British settlers began to find their way over the Alleghanies—and they were beginning to do so in this period—a clash was inevitable. It was not to be evaded by any treaties or bargainings such as could stave off a war in Europe.

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 55.

And there was one marked weakness in the French position, a legacy of the treaty of Utrecht. The very entrance to their main line of communication, the St. Lawrence river, was flanked by British possessions on both sides.[1] Newfoundland, long a subject of dispute, was now recognised as definitely British. On the opposite side, Acadia had been ceded to Britain by the treaty. But the limits of Acadia had never been determined. The British view was that it included the area later occupied by the colony of New Brunswick, and extended over the trackless forests which reached as far as the St. Lawrence; and undoubtedly the French had been in the habit of giving the name to a large part of this area. The British view would have made Acadia extend as far as the river St. Croix, where New England began. The French, on the other hand, were for limiting Acadia to the peninsula of Nova Scotia. Over this there was endless disputation.

Meanwhile the French were labouring in two ways to amend the strategic difficulty created by the British possession of Newfoundland and Acadia. On Cape Breton Island, which had not been included in the cession, they began, as early as 1720, to build a great fortress, known as Louisbourg. It was designed by Vauban, the greatest military engineer of his time; it cost thirty million livres to build; and it was beyond comparison the strongest fortress on the American continent. It was meant to secure the entrance to the St. Lawrence. Later they began to build forts on the isthmus of Nova Scotia; and through the priests they were meanwhile doing all that they could to keep alive the feeling of French patriotism among the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia, and to persuade them that in the event of conflict their loyalty was due to the French and not to the British king.

It is fair to say that the French were far more alert than their rivals to see the probability, indeed the certainty, of the coming conflict. This conflict was every day becoming more inevitable; and the shadow of it was largely responsible for the gulf that was slowly widening between France and Britain in European politics. Thus trade rivalry in the tropical seas, which was forcing Spain into an anti-British policy, combined with the colonial rivalry between France and Britain in North America to bring about a natural combination of the Bourbon powers, and to make a

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 54.

final tremendous conflict for both trading and colonial supremacy inevitable in the near future.

[Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*; Meredith's *Economic History of England*; Glynn's *John Law of Lauriston*; Egerton's *British Colonial Policy*; G. L. Beer's *The Old Colonial System*; Grant's *History of Canada*; Parkman's *Half-century of Conflict*; Channing's *History of the United States*; Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History*; Lucas' *Historical Geography of the British Colonies*.]

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WHIGS

(A.D. 1714-1739)

George I., 1714: George II., 1727: George III., 1760.

§ 1. *The Whig Ministries.*

The period during which the Whigs exercised unchallenged supremacy extended over two reigns; over the reigns of two kings who felt themselves to be foreigners in Britain, occupying a very precarious throne. Because of this insecurity neither George I. nor George II. ever ventured to interfere in the internal or colonial policy of their realms. Only in foreign affairs, where their position as Electors of Hanover modified the situation, did they directly influence British policy; and even here they went cautiously.

As George III. was to show, the legal powers of the Crown were still very great, and in particular its patronage was so extensive that if the king had strong personal views he could readily make them felt. But any attempt to use these powers boldly would inevitably have brought about sharp criticism and opposition in Parliament, as it did under George III.; and in the precarious position of their throne, neither George I. nor George II. dared to risk this danger. In all domestic affairs they left their powers and their patronage to be wielded by ministers. In effect the royal authority was now limited to choosing which among the Whig leaders should be entrusted with these powers; and in making this choice the king was limited to the few who could (with the help of Crown patronage) make a majority in the House of Commons. The use of Crown patronage, which the king dared not wield freely, but which he could transfer, enabled the chosen minister to dominate public affairs so long as he did nothing that was seriously unpopular.

Even the modest power of throwing the handkerchief to one or another of the few possible candidates—which was a very different thing from the free choice of ministers by the Crown—brought it about that the rather dull and sordid courts of these German kings were full of intrigue, and their unprepossessing mistresses made harvest from the

greed of rival politicians. Moreover in each reign the heir apparent, the Prince of Wales, was on the worst of terms with his father, and maintained a sort of opposition court, which became a centre for disappointed politicians, who hoped that the handkerchief would be thrown to them when the son succeeded the father. This rather unsavoury feature of the Hanoverian family had one advantageous result in the peculiar circumstances of the period. It was better that politicians in opposition should fix their hopes on the heir to the crown than that they should intrigue with the exiled line.

Because they were conscious of the insecurity of their own position, and therefore desired to avoid unsettlement, both George I. and George II. were remarkably steady in the support they gave to the ministers they chose. Hence the period is distinguished by the length of time for which power was held by successive ministries. Practically there were only three ministries between 1714 and the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1756. The first of these was dominated by the personality of Stanhope, a very able soldier and diplomat of the school of Marlborough. The chief interest of his rule lies in the firmness with which the Jacobite danger was handled, and the fixing of the main lines of British foreign policy: Stanhope largely deserves the credit for the Franco-British alliance, which dominated foreign politics for nearly thirty years.

Stanhope died in the midst of the South Sea trouble (1720); and the skill with which the tangle was handled by Sir Robert Walpole ensured for him the succession to supreme power, which he held for an unbroken period of more than twenty years. For a moment his ascendency was imperilled on the death of George I. The opposition who had clustered round George II. when he was Prince of Wales hoped to take Walpole's place now that the Prince had become king; but, guided by his very able wife, who saw Walpole's value, George II. disappointed the hopes of his former friends, and Walpole maintained a complete monopoly of power till the outbreak of war with Spain (which he hated and conducted badly) brought about his fall (1742).

The ministry which succeeded Walpole was headed at first by Lord Wilmington; though the direction of foreign affairs fell to a very brilliant and witty personage, Lord Carteret, who was distinguished among all his contemporaries by his intimate acquaintance with European politics, and who therefore involved Britain more deeply

than ever in the complexities of European affairs at the beginning of the War of the Austrian Succession. When Wilmington died after a year of office (1743), his place was taken, without any material change of *personnel* or policy, by Henry Pelham, whose tenure of power (shared at first with Carteret) lasted until his death in 1754; and Pelham in his turn was succeeded by his brother and colleague the Duke of Newcastle. This long-lived but essentially continuous ministry was supposed to represent a reaction against the policy of Walpole. In reality it adhered in the main to his methods and aims, though it included a greater variety of political groups than Walpole had ever combined: the Pelhams were essentially pupils of Walpole and continuators of his policy. Thus there is a remarkable continuity in the political history of this long period; and, despite all the intrigues and quarrels of the Whig groups, no real difference of principle is perceptible until the time when, amid the disasters which marked the beginning of the Seven Years' War, the commanding personality of William Pitt thrust aside the oligarchs and gave a new direction to British policy.

§ 2. *Walpole, the Great Whig: the Principles of his Policy.*

The long sway of Walpole[1] thus forms the heart of the period, and it illustrates very clearly at once the merits and the defects of Whig government. Walpole was in many ways a typical English country gentleman, devoted to a country life, never happier than when he could escape to his Norfolk estate, fond of good living, a Philistine in all matters of art, jovial, good-natured and full of the prejudices of his class. He was also a sound Whig, believing genuinely in liberty as the Whigs conceived it, and holding that liberty was best maintained by the preservation of the Revolution settlement and the Protestant succession with the least possible friction or disturbance. He sincerely desired the welfare of his country, and he identified this welfare with the maintenance of peace and the expansion of industry and commerce. He was a man of very great practical capacity, especially in fields which (like finance and trade) do not require the display of the higher gifts of imagination, sympathy and insight. He was a shrewd judge of men, especially of their weaknesses, and as he never lost his temper

[1] Lord Morley has an excellent short life of Walpole in the Twelve English Statesmen Series.

he had a happy knack of managing men. He was wholly free from cant; but he was incapable either of being inspired by lofty ideals or of understanding those who were—he shared the contempt of his age for 'enthusiasm.' Long views, great visions, whole-hearted self-devotion to a high cause, were altogether beyond him. Religion had no meaning for him; the Church was for him (as for his rival Bolingbroke) a convenient mechanism for keeping people quiet. He was perfectly satisfied with the world he knew, and wished only to keep it secure and undisturbed. Such a man could not be a great national leader, or see far ahead into the problems of the future. But he was admirably qualified to command the confidence of 'common-sense' men; he reflected perfectly the temper of his own age and of his own class; and therefore he was able to render the great service of keeping things steady at a time when his country needed just that, when a period of fallow was required between two periods of strenuous activity.

Walpole owed his long tenure of power largely to his skill in managing the House of Commons. For that reason, and because of the virulent charges of his opponents, he is often accused of having introduced wholesale corruption into British political life. He used the patronage of the Crown to help in making a majority; he worked in close harmony with the greatest of all Whig borough-mongers, the Duke of Newcastle. But in these respects he was only using the methods habitually employed by all his predecessors since the Revolution, though he used them more skilfully and more unflinchingly. Indeed, in the conditions of the time, these methods were essential to the maintenance of a strong government. There is no definite evidence that he employed direct bribery, though in occasional instances he probably did so: at his fall his opponents laboured to make out a case against him, and wholly failed to do so. Methods of corruption were used on a far more wholesale scale by Pelham's ministry, and still more by George III., than they were ever used by Walpole. In the main his mastery of the House of Commons was due to his shrewd understanding of that body, and to the fact that he carefully avoided raising questions which were likely to be troublesome: his motto was *quieta non movere*, 'let sleeping dogs lie.'

Accordingly the main feature of his long sway was the absence of all great issues in which principles were involved, and a remarkable paucity of legislation on any questions

of importance other than finance and trade. The Whigs were traditionally advocates of religious toleration, and friends of the Dissenters. Yet next to nothing was done to relieve the Dissenters from the disabilities which rested upon them. Stanhope had repealed the Occasional Conformity Act and the Schism Act; but Walpole had even opposed the repeal, probably because he did not want to rouse the High Church Tories. On several occasions proposals were made for the relief of the Dissenters; Walpole threw cold water upon them, and ensured their failure. 'Let sleeping dogs lie.' But from 1727 onwards he passed an annual Act of Indemnity for those Dissenters who chose to break the law—a pusillanimous and dangerous way of remedying injustice.

Hence his rule was a period of artificial calm. England lay quiet, and Jacobitism was being gradually suffocated by prosperity, as the rising of '45 was to show: yet the absurd outbreak of excitement over the Excise Bill of 1733 (which will be referred to later) showed how easily any serious controversy might arouse a dangerous storm. Scotland also was uneasily quiet, and was slowly taking advantage of the benefits of the Union: Walpole managed Scotland through Lord Islay, the Duke of Argyll's brother, who organised the elections and gave him the steady support of the forty-five Scottish members and of the sixteen Scottish peers. Yet the fury of the Porteous riots in 1736, which arose out of the execution of a popular smuggler, and are only remembered because nothing else was happening and because Scott chose the episode as the subject of one of his best novels,[1] showed that in Scotland also excitement could be easily aroused.

Ireland, too, under all her monstrous afflictions, was astonishingly undisturbed; but the furious outcry which was raised over the issue of a new and much-needed copper coinage (Wood's halfpence) in 1723 showed that here also storms might readily arise. The importance of the episode was that Swift used the occasion to wield his formidable pen in the *Drapier's Letters*, in which, starting from a skilful exaggeration and perversion of the facts about 'Wood's halfpence,' he went on to denounce the iniquity and injustice of the system of repression by which Irish trade and industry were being destroyed. This, with other tracts of Swift's, was the beginning of effective protest against the shameful treatment of Ireland. The sleeping dogs were stirring. They must be soothed to sleep again. Walpole

[1] *The Heart of Midlothian.*

withdrew Wood's halfpence promptly. But he was content to 'paper the cracks.' He made no attempt to consider or to deal seriously with the Irish situation; he maintained unaltered the repressive system of the Revolution, and even intensified it. In 1719, before his accession to power, a Declaratory Act had been passed by the British Parliament formally asserting its power to pass measures for Ireland over the head of the Irish Parliament. Walpole had made no protest; and he used the powers thus asserted. Not for him was any large and statesmanlike policy of reconciliation and reconstruction. 'Let sleeping dogs lie' was the sum of his political wisdom in all the larger fields of statesmanship: keep things quiet, and do nothing in particular.

That was his policy also in regard to the American colonies, except—an important exception—in matters of trade. Ever since the Revolution a continuous controversy had been going on, especially in New England, over the question of the salaries of governors: the home government insisting that the governors must be paid fixed salaries, the colonial assemblies refusing to vote money for more than a year at a time, in order to keep the governors under their power; and the same question was also arising in regard to judges' salaries. It was a constitutional problem of the most fundamental importance, involving the whole question of the relations between the colonial assemblies and the central government. On the principle of avoiding controversy and 'letting sleeping dogs lie,' Walpole's government in 1729 instructed the colonial governors to let the question drop, and take what they could get. Colonial questions were dealt with by the Board of Trade, but under the Whig system the Board of Trade was only an advisory body to one of the two Secretaries of State, with whom the final decision rested. The responsible Secretary of State during most of Walpole's period was the Duke of Newcastle, whose simple method of dealing with colonial troubles was—not to read the despatches. When Walpole was once advised to tax the colonies by the authority of Parliament, he answered that he had enough trouble about taxation in England without raising more in America. It was a shrewd answer, and showed his practical common sense. But he has been praised on this ground for his wise statesmanship in colonial affairs, and this praise he certainly does not deserve. For his policy was simply a policy of drift. The problem of the relations between the colonies and the mother country was a serious and difficult problem; it was, or ought to have

been, obvious that the old colonial system would no longer work. The interval of peace between the war against Louis XIV. and the inevitable coming conflict for supremacy in North America was the time when this question ought to have been seriously and quietly discussed: the colonists, aware as they were of the danger from France, felt the value of the imperial connexion, and might have been ready to join in working out a new system of relations. But Walpole shut his eyes to the coming conflict, and had no sense of the need for any change in the political relations of the members of the Commonwealth. So a great opportunity was lost; an opportunity that was never to be regained. To let sleeping dogs lie is not a sufficient maxim for statesmen in a changing world.

For the same reason Walpole's foreign policy, which consisted essentially of staving off war as long as possible by patching up each difficulty as it arose, may equally be charged with lack of foresight. He gave his country peace, indeed, during a long period when she needed it, and that was a great gift. But he showed no appreciation of the importance of the changes which were coming about in the European scene: of the significance of Poland's downfall and Russia's emergence: of the real meaning and probable results of the Franco-Spanish alliance of 1733.

In short, in all the wider fields of politics Walpole's policy was one of short views and temporary expedients. He was lacking in imagination and largeness of vision, and for that reason cannot be given a high place among statesmen, useful as were his services at the time. His deficiencies were not peculiar to himself. They were characteristic of the Whig oligarchy, of which indeed he was the best product.

§ 3. *Walpole's Constructive Work.*

In some fields, however, Walpole's work was of permanent value. In the first place he was the first leading British statesman to recognise in practice, and to do everything in his power to emphasise, the predominance of the House of Commons in the British system of government. All his predecessors, Montague and Somers, Harley and St. John and Stanhope, had hastened, as soon as they attained power, to accept peerages and take their places in the House of Lords. Walpole remained until his fall plain Sir Robert, and clung to the House of Commons. When, having accepted the Earldom of Orford after his fall, he met his old

rival Pulteney, who had hoped to succeed him and had obtained a peerage as Earl of Bath, his greeting showed what he thought of the relative importance of the two houses: 'You and I,' he said, 'are now two as insignificant men as any in England.' There can be no doubt that under Walpole, when the Prime Minister was always present in the House of Commons and shaped his course by its opinion, that house became the real centre of English government as it had never been before. The idea embodied in the Act of Settlement, that ministers should not be members of the House of Commons,[1] was finally killed by Walpole's practice. In a higher degree than Pitt, though in a rather different sense, he deserves to be called the 'Great Commoner.'

In the second place, he was in a real sense the first British Prime Minister, controlling and dominating his cabinet, and exercising a co-ordinating power over the work of all departments. This was an essential contribution to the growth of the British system of government. Walpole attained this position by insisting that ministers who took a different line from government and publicly opposed its measures must lose their posts. By acting on this principle he drove many of the ablest men into opposition, but he increased the strength and homogeneity of his ministry. His action in this respect was generally attributed to his jealousy of power, and no doubt that had something to do with it. But he saw that a ministry must be homogeneous, and that the various departments must be in harmony with one another, if government is to be efficient. One of the chief grounds of attack against him, formally put forward in 1741, was that he had striven to make himself a Prime Minister, a thing unknown to the British constitution. That such a charge should be made shows how little the principles and working of cabinet government were yet understood. The notion that no one minister should exercise control over his colleagues, each being alike the king's representative in his own department, died hard, and was to work much mischief in the future. But the experience of two centuries has proved that Walpole's principle was the right one, and that it represents the only way in which a coherent government can be reconciled with the supremacy of Parliament.

The field of politics in which Walpole's best work was done was that of finance. He commanded the entire confidence and support of the 'moneyed men' and the trading interests. He was able materially to reduce the burden of the National

[1] See above, Bk. v. chap. vi. p. 578.

Debt by cutting down the rate of interest and creating a sinking fund for the redemption of debt out of the savings thus made. He kept taxation low. He freed the raw materials of industry from fiscal burdens, and systematically encouraged export trade by bounties. There is no doubt that the very great prosperity of British foreign trade during this period was encouraged by his wise direction of finance, and by the confidence which it engendered. Of all his fiscal devices that which attracted most attention was the Excise Bill of 1733. Its objects were modest enough. Ever since the Civil War excise (*i.e.* duties levied on goods in England before they were sold) had yielded a large proportion of the national revenue—a considerably larger proportion than customs duties, which were levied on foreign goods at the port of import. Customs duties, especially on wine and tobacco, were largely avoided by smuggling. Walpole proposed to substitute excise duties of the same amount on those goods : they would be imported free of duty, deposited in bonded warehouses, and taxed when issued. He hoped in this way to avoid the loss on smuggling, and at the same time to encourage foreign trade, because the goods could be re-exported without paying duty. The proposal aroused a most amazing and unintelligible outcry, which was unscrupulously stimulated by the misrepresentations of Walpole's opponents. They represented it as the introduction of French methods of government and as a tyrannous invasion of the rights of free Britons ; effigies of Walpole were burnt by excited mobs, to the cry of ' No wooden shoes ! ' ; and this quite harmless and useful measure had to be withdrawn. It is characteristic of Walpole's limitations that the loss of this modest and pedestrian measure wounded him more than any other episode of his career.

Walpole's trade policy, which was nearer his heart than any other part of his work, was essentially a continuance of the economic policy of the Revolution, which aimed primarily at encouraging production in Britain, at turning her into the manufacturing centre of the whole empire, and at attracting to her market all the products of the empire. For that purpose he was even more ready than his predecessors to use the legislative power of the British Parliament ; and under his guidance the control exercised over colonial trade was considerably stiffened. Several new products were added, by enactment, to the list of 'enumerated articles ' which could only be exported to England. The Molasses Act (1733), which aroused such bitter protest in

New England, was one of Walpole's enactments. It tried to prevent the colonies from buying the cheap and excellent sugar-products of the French West Indies. But, more serious, it was under Walpole and his successors that a systematic attempt was made to prevent the rise of manufactures in the colonies by legislative prohibition. The colonies were forbidden to engage in copper-smelting (1732); all their copper ore must be sent to Britain to be smelted. They were forbidden to manufacture hats; the furs of which hats were made must all be sent to Britain. These Acts did not, indeed, cause much trouble, because such colonial manufacture as existed was on the smallest scale. But the principle was clearly enough enunciated. And in 1750, under Pelham, the inheritor of Walpole's ideas, the principle was given a very dangerous application. The colonies were beginning to produce considerable quantities of iron ore, and to manufacture some of it, as yet on a small scale. The Act of 1750 prohibited all iron manufactures in the colonies, and ordained the closing of all the existing factories. This enactment, taken in conjunction with its predecessors, convinced the colonists, and especially the New Englanders, who were most active in manufacture, that the mother country was bent upon checking and hampering their development in her own interests. The whole of this legislation contributed largely to produce the alienation which eventually led to the revolt of the colonies.

At a later date, when they were in opposition to George III., the Whigs, blaming the king and his advisers for all the colonial trouble, took credit to themselves for the greater wisdom of the colonial policy pursued in the period of Whig ascendency. It is manifest that no such credit is due. The greatest of Whig statesmen was not only blind to the need for a revision of the colonial system: he and his successors exaggerated its worst features, and prepared the coming storm. Had America been, in Walpole's time, as she was in 1763, free from the danger of a French attack, the 'sleeping dogs' of colonial discontent would not have confined themselves to growling. Their growls could not be heard across the Atlantic—especially through a Secretary of State who never read the American despatches.

On a broad view of his policy it is thus impossible to regard Walpole as a great statesman. His one great service was that he gave the new British system of government time to get itself rooted, and contributed to define some of its most important features. But one other praise must be allowed

to this genial, limited, 'practical' man. He was extraordinarily tolerant of criticism. Though he was continuously assailed with a venom which knew no bounds, he made no attempt (unlike his predecessors of both parties) to revenge himself upon his opponents, otherwise than by excluding them from appointments in his gift. There were no impeachments under Walpole; no attempts to restrict freedom of speech or writing. The stream of criticism went on with vigour, in the press as well as in Parliament, and the habit of public discussion of political problems continued to grow.

§ 4. *The Opposition to the Whigs: the Ideas of Bolingbroke.*

Solidly founded as Walpole's power was, it was always the object of bitter attack. Most of this hostile criticism was merely factious opposition, the work of men whose real complaint against the great minister was that he kept them out of office. 'All these men have their price,' Walpole once said; and of most of them the charge was true: when they got their turn of office under the Pelhams, who tried to satisfy all factions by sharing the spoils widely, they showed themselves less enlightened, less far-seeing and more corrupt than Walpole had been.

But alongside of this factious and place-hunting opposition there was a more genuine opposition of principles, the centre of which was Bolingbroke. He had been allowed to return from exile in 1723, and, though he was excluded from active political life, he made his house the centre of the opposition, and tried to imbue a mixed group of Tories and discontented Whigs with his own political ideas. Among the disciples of Bolingbroke was William Pitt, who, with his cousins of the house of Grenville, was violently opposing Walpole, mainly on the ground that his foreign policy subordinated the interests of Britain to those of Hanover, and disregarded the great colonial rivalry which to him seemed to be the first of all questions for Britain. Pitt was deeply influenced by Bolingbroke's doctrines, though he later came to distrust that brilliant cynic; and the effect of Bolingbroke's teaching was apparent in much of Pitt's later career. During the half-dozen years following 1726 Bolingbroke maintained a weekly paper, *The Craftsman*, every issue of which was filled with witty, effective and often unscrupulous denunciation of the minister. But through this unending diatribe he expounded political doctrines which were sharply in conflict with those of the Whigs, and which he hoped might

be accepted as the creed of a new and more rational Toryism. In the 'thirties Bolingbroke grew tired of the struggle, and in 1738 he retired once more to France. But before he left he had written, in 1738 (though it was not published till much later), a political essay, *The Idea of a Patriot King*, which gave a very clear and forcible exposition of his political creed, and was to wield a remarkable influence on English political thought.

The essence of Bolingbroke's political doctrine was that the Whigs had ruined the balance of the British constitution by enslaving both the Crown and Parliament for their own purposes; thus setting up an oligarchy in place of a constitutional monarchy. If politics were to be brought into a healthy state rigid party organisation, which the Whigs had brought to perfection, must be destroyed; Parliament must be freed from its dominion, and from all corrupting influences, and once more become the free mouthpiece of the nation. Above all, the Crown must be freed from its slavery to the oligarchy, and enabled to play the part designed for it by the Revolution. It must stand above parties, and disregard them. It must bring the ablest men into the service of the nation, without regard to their connexions, without considering whether they possessed 'borough influence' or not. There must be no more 'Prime Ministers' like Walpole, arrogating all power to themselves, reducing other ministers to ciphers, and denying all chance of rendering public service to those who differed from them; each minister must have his full responsibility for his own office, being answerable to the king and to Parliament alone for the way in which he exercised it. Only the Crown could save the situation; because it was by annexing Crown patronage that the group of corrupt oligarchs held their own. The one hope of the nation therefore depended upon the appearance of a Patriot King, who would overthrow the oligarchs, make himself the leader of a free nation, and call in the best men to advise him.

These ideas had a real attraction for many men. They were very attractive to Pitt, conscious of the possession of great powers, and aware that his lack of 'borough influence' and the jealousy of the Walpoles and Newcastles excluded him from power. Bolingbroke's theories were also to have, in the future, a mighty influence upon George III., who cast himself for the part of Patriot King.

They even had some influence upon the formation of the Pelham ministry (1743), which was known as the Broad-

Bottom administration, because it tried to include all the groups, even Tories and Jacobites, and therefore to be a sort of national non-party government. Perhaps it was for that reason that (after Carteret, with his extreme 'continental' views of foreign policy, had been got rid of) William Pitt accepted a post in this ministry, first as Treasurer of the Navy, and afterwards as Paymaster-General. But he found that in these offices he could exercise no influence at all upon the course of affairs. In reality policy was still directed by men of the school of Walpole, inspired by Walpole's ideas; and the use of patronage and corruption for the securing of control over Parliament went on more actively than ever under the management of the Pelhams, who were past masters of these arts. The only differences were that they were less competent than Walpole; and that the mouths of critics like Pitt were now closed with the sugar-plums of office. Indeed, there is nothing memorable about this long ministry save that it carried on the War of the Austrian Succession in a way which showed that its ideas of foreign policy were still limited to Europe, and that it had no vision of the vast issues that were awaiting decision in America and India. The Pelhams lived from day to day; they had no clear principles or aims; their conception of the art of government seemed to be confined to bargaining and bartering with the various groups of borough-mongers; and in the end they drifted into the most momentous colonial war in which Britain had yet been engaged without being ready for it, or realising what it involved.

The Whig oligarchy had served its purpose. It had helped Britain to pass quietly through what might have been a critical period. But it had been blind to all high ideals and lofty aims; and, in spite of the prosperity it had brought, the period covered by its rule was the most materialistic, and the least redeemed by great ideas, of any period in the history of the Commonwealth. It left a new generation to deal with vast problems which had been accentuated by its blindness or neglect, and above all with the problems of the Commonwealth itself,—with the question whether the destinies of the New World were to be in French hands or British, and whether, therefore, these rich lands were to be ruled on the French system of absolute monarchy or the English system of self-government; and with the greater and more difficult question whether a mode could be found whereby a fellowship of free States could live together in

brotherhood and freedom. Both of these questions had been shaping themselves during the period of Whig dominance. Both of them the Whigs had disregarded.

[Robertson's *England under the Hanoverians*; Leadam's *England from 1702 to 1760*; Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*; Sichel's *Bolingbroke*; Coxe's *Walpole*; Williams' *Pitt*; H. Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.*; Hervey's *Memoirs*; Anson's *Law and Custom of the Constitution*; Blauvelt's *Development of Cabinet Government*; Hallam's *Constitutional History*.]

CHAPTER V

THE WESLEYS AND THE REVIVAL OF ENTHUSIASM

§ 1. *The Age of Reason.*

Not only in Britain but in all the lands of Western civilisation the first half of the eighteenth century was an age of materialism, an age of prose, an age of 'common sense,' when men measured all human activities by their visible and tangible results, and 'enthusiasm' for spiritual or ideal ends was regarded as evidence of an unbalanced mind, because it allowed reason to be deflected by emotion. National well-being was identified with national wealth, the pursuit of which was so manifestly 'rational' that it justified many iniquities, such as the horrors of the slave-trade. Politics, which is concerned with the organisation of the co-operative action of human societies in the pursuit of justice and well-being, and which ought to be one of the noblest of human activities, became under these conditions a sordid business. There were no high conflicts of principle capable of challenging men to devotion or self-sacrifice. The religious zeal of the last two centuries had vanished, and the humanitarian zeal of the next age had not begun to make itself felt. The 'Liberty' to which the Whigs professed devotion, and to which they had rendered real services in the past, was regarded as something that had been already secured and only needed to be safeguarded, not as something that ought to be perpetually growing and that would become dead and unmeaning if it ceased to grow; the 'Loyalty' of which the Tories boasted was not strong enough to enlist real sacrifices, except among the wild and backward clans of the Highlands of Scotland. Politics became, as we have seen, a matter of intrigue among rival and corrupt groups to obtain possession of the spoils of office. Yet, next to the pursuit of wealth, politics formed the most engrossing interest of the time, not only among the politicians but among the intelligent public.

But these statements, standing by themselves, would be

unjust to the age. It was an age of enlightenment, which proclaimed the sovereignty of reason, hated cant, and strove to free itself from prejudice and to analyse fearlessly the ideas which it was asked to accept. It was therefore an age of criticism and of healthy challenge to received beliefs; and in this way it prepared for the great age of destruction and reconstruction which was to follow. Its most characteristic writer and thinker was Voltaire, the great French critic who had to spend most of his life in exile because of the unsparing freedom of his pen. Hating all sham and unreality, and hating still more the injustices and cruelties to which they led, Voltaire was incapable of appreciating the realities that lay beneath even formalist religion, or the potency of emotion, or the limits of pure reason; but he rendered great services to his age and kind by submitting all the institutions and ideas of his time to the corrosive acid of his criticism, which burnt up a great deal of rubbish; and although he had no glowing visions of a noble future to offer to his fellow-men, and was disdainful of the high hopes inspired by Rousseau and others, yet he is rightly regarded as one of the harbingers of the French Revolution. Indeed the whole of this great age of criticism was a preparation for the vast changes that were coming.

In Britain the activity of a critical spirit is the most marked feature of all the best writing of the time; even in the one great poet of the age, Pope, the critical spirit overpowered the imaginative and emotional elements. The gentle and kindly social satire of Addison and Steele, the fierce and venomous satire of Swift, the irony and the minute descriptive analysis of Defoe, all are alike criticism, more or less destructive, of the social organisation in which these writers lived; not one of them indulges in ideals or dreams for the future. Three of the greatest of British critical philosophers belonged to this age: Butler, Berkeley and David Hume. Behind them came a great army of writers on theological and philosophical subjects, now wholly forgotten; but their abundance shows that a real fermentation of the national mind was going on. The intellectual world was in fact intensely interested in philosophical and religious discussions along rationalist lines, as was shown by the excitement aroused by the controversy which raged round Bishop Hoadly, and the whole of what was known as the Deist controversy. But it was purely an intellectual interest. One very important result of this critical spirit

was a rapid spread of religious scepticism, which affected all shades of religious belief in Britain and in Europe; even in Scotland and New England this was a time of what was called Moderatism, and of flagging ardour. The higher clergy in the English Church were largely sceptical, and consequently took their religious duties anything but seriously; among the parochial clergy a large proportion regarded their professional duties as more or less of a formal obligation attached to the incomes they got by patronage; many of them were habitual absentees, especially in Ireland; many more lived jolly and sometimes useful lives indistinguishable from those of their lay neighbours; they spent most of their time in farming, fox-hunting, drinking, and sitting on the bench, but did not conceive themselves to have any duties to their flocks beyond the reading of the service on Sundays; and though there were honest, kindly and hard-working parsons like Parson Adams in *Tom Jones*, even they seldom had anything to offer to their flocks beyond what the rigid Scots used to call 'a cauld and barren morality,' wholly lacking in inspiring power. The decay of fervour and the growth of scepticism were equally marked in the Dissenting communities. It was during this period that nearly all the surviving Presbyterian congregations in England became Unitarian.

Hence neither the Established nor the Dissenting Churches showed any energy in what may be called missionary work, either at home or abroad. Content to carry on the conventional exercises of religion for the respectable people who frequented them as a matter of course, they had forgotten that they existed for the purpose of insistently reminding all men that man cannot live by bread alone, and of bringing into the routine of life the inspiring conviction of the reality and the supreme importance of the unseen and the spiritual. The most unhappy aspect of this deadness was that it led to a complete neglect of the new classes of labouring men and women created by the growth of British industries: the miners, the weavers, the sailors and dockyard workers crowded in the waterside slums of great ports, were wholly neglected; they were merely a disregarded part of the machinery for creating wealth; nothing was done to remind them that the dignity of their manhood was a greater thing than the products of their labour, and that life was more than livelihood. The idea that national well-being depended upon the quality of the nation's manhood still more than upon the volume of the nation's material

wealth was in this age strangely forgotten ; and any assertion that the cultivation of manhood rather than of wealth was the supreme interest of the community would have been regarded as mere 'enthusiasm.' 'Common sense,' indeed, has never taken kindly to such a view, which it demands uncommon sense really to believe to the point of acting upon it.

§ 2. *The Beginnings of Organised Philanthropy : the Colony of Georgia.*

Although there were not yet any such vast aggregations of human beings in industrial towns as the Industrial Revolution was to bring about, nevertheless there was a great deal of misery, ignorance and vice in London, in the big ports like Bristol and Liverpool, in the mining areas of Cornwall and Newcastle, and in some of the weaving districts. One sign of this was the craving for cheap spirits which spread like a pestilence through the country ; the ineffective attempts of Parliament to check gin-drinking in 1729 and 1733 may perhaps be described as the first attempts in the direction of social reform by legislation. But they came with a bad grace from an assembly of three-bottle men ; nor was any cure to be found in that direction. Another sign of the unhealthy state of society was the extraordinary ease with which violent agitations were stirred up about nothing in particular, as in the preposterous excitement over the Excise Bill, or the Porteous Riots in Edinburgh, or many other minor riots. Whig government gave the people little to get excited about. But the best way of avoiding unnatural and unhealthy excitements is not to give people nothing to think about : it is to give them big and worthy things to think about.

Yet there were signs that even in this rather stagnant age a new spirit was beginning to arise. One of these was the beginning of philanthropy and of that humanitarian spirit which was to attain to such remarkable heights in the next age. Charity schools were established in large numbers all over the country. A list of British charitable institutions with the dates of their foundation would show that in many spheres (notably that of hospitals) this was a period of beginnings, after a long quiescence since the later Middle Ages. A number of public hospitals supported by charity were founded during this period in various parts of England ; and alongside of them were a number of institutions whose

aim was to give a chance to unfortunate children, like Captain Coram's Foundling Hospital in London, or Captain Bryan Blundell's Bluecoat Hospital for orphans in Liverpool: pity for children is always one of the first signs of an awakening of conscience. Another sign of new life was the beginning of concern about the hideous conditions in British prisons, and especially about the treatment of debtors, who were left to pine in horrible gaols without hope of release.

The greatest enterprise for the relief of distress undertaken during this age was the foundation of the colony of Georgia in 1733. It was the only British colony founded during this period, and the last of the famous thirteen; and, unlike any of its predecessors, it was founded neither for the sake of commercial profits (despite their appeal to this generation), nor in order to forward a particular set of religious or political opinions, but solely for philanthropic reasons—to give a fresh start in life to unfortunate debtors. The founder of the colony was General James Oglethorpe, a well-known personage in the fashionable and literary life of London, who had been chairman of a parliamentary committee on the state of the prisons, and had been horrified by what he had thus learnt. The necessary funds were raised by appeals to public benevolence, and a grant of land was obtained from the Crown, though Walpole was rather contemptuously hostile to the scheme, which he regarded as a piece of 'enthusiasm.' Oglethorpe devoted himself with real unselfishness for more than ten years to the development of the colony, to which he took out two parties of debtors, supplying them with the means of making a start. He also found room for a settlement of Highland emigrants, upon whom the colony mainly depended for its defence against Spanish attacks; and he welcomed a party of persecuted Protestants from the archbishopric of Salzburg, and another of Moravians from Bohemia. The foundation of Georgia represents, on the eve of the great revolt, and in contrast with the narrow and selfish colonial policy of the Whigs, the appearance of a new spirit in colonising work, which was to have great fruits in the nineteenth century. Oglethorpe tried to restrict the import of spirits and to prevent the use of negro slaves; but both restrictions vanished when the colony was transferred to the Crown in 1752, and was therefore endowed with the ordinary system of colonial government.

§ 3. *The Religious Revival in Wales, and the Methodist Movement.*

But these signs of the birth of a new and more wholesome spirit were wholly dwarfed by the great religious revivals which began in this period. They were to exercise a continually increasing influence during the next period, and were in many ways to influence the character and development of the British Commonwealth. It is the Methodist movement, led and inspired by the Wesleys and Whitefield, which usually draws to itself most attention. But alongside of the Wesleys' work, and largely independent of it, there was an equally remarkable religious revival in Wales, which began in 1735, and attracted little attention mainly because it was chiefly carried on in the Welsh language. Nowhere was a new breath of life more necessary than in Wales, for nowhere was the deadness of the official Church more marked; and the consequence was that from 1735 onwards the Welsh people broke away more and more from the Church, and from the traditions and ideas of the governing class which the Church largely embodied; Wales began to develop for herself a distinctive and independent body of ideas, of which the 'chapel' became the hearth and centre.

In a real sense the religious revival of 1735 and the following years was the beginning of the history of modern Wales. The preaching of Griffith Jones and his fellow evangelists, who appealed to Welshmen in their neglected native tongue, aroused the most intense religious emotion, and stirred into life that Celtic *hwyl* which the ancient bards had known how to arouse. It was followed by the beginnings of a remarkable and spontaneous educational movement, carried on by travelling schools, which was necessarily crude and shallow at first, because it had no centres of learning from which to draw knowledge and wisdom. It also contributed to reawaken the old contests of poetry and song which the bards had once maintained; and in this and other ways helped to stimulate the rise of a new national spirit in the little mountain principality. No one yet marked the significance of this development, which did not rise above the horizon of the politician and the publicist until late in the nineteenth century; but its first beginnings date from the age of reason and of materialism, which would have scoffed at the idea of attaching importance to any such obscure movements.

The Methodist movement in England, on the other hand, from a very early date attracted the puzzled attention of

the ruling classes, who did not know whether to be more disgusted or amused at this strange outburst of enthusiasm, and who never realised for a moment that what they were laughing at was enormously more important for the life of the nation than their own ministerial bargainings and balance-of-power negotiations.

John and Charles Wesley were two Oxford men of considerable academic distinction, the sons of a hard-working Lincolnshire parson ;[1] both of their grandfathers, on the mother's and the father's side, had been among the Puritan divines ejected in 1662. At Oxford they founded in 1729 a small religious society, whose members came to be known as the Methodists ; and in this body, which devoted itself amid much ridicule to private prayer, and to visiting the sick, the poor and the criminals in the gaols, they made friends with George Whitefield, who had been a waiter in an inn and was striving to earn his education as a servitor at Pembroke College. In 1735 the two Wesleys went to the new philanthropic colony of Georgia, whose object strongly appealed to them ; they were filled with missionary fervour, and hoped to convert the heathen. They returned, disappointed, in 1738. But a new field was ready for them. Whitefield had meanwhile begun to preach to the degraded and neglected colliers of Kingswood near Bristol; and, preaching in the open fields, he had aroused the most extraordinary enthusiasm and produced the most amazing effects upon the life of his hearers. Wesley took over the torch from Whitefield, and began, in 1739, the task of preaching in the highways and hedges, wherever he could get men and women to hearken to him.

Neither the Wesleys nor Whitefield felt any hostility to the Established Church or to its forms of worship ; till his death Wesley protested that he was a member of that Church. Their aim was to supplement its work by a more direct appeal to the neglected masses than the formal reading of service could possibly make. Had they been recognised by the Church, their work would have stood in the same relation to the regular work of the Church as that of St. Francis and the friars had done in the Middle Ages : indeed there was much that was akin to the spirit of St. Francis in the life and work of the Wesleys and Whitefield and their followers. The Roman Church in the thirteenth century had been wise enough and humane enough to welcome the help of the

[1] *Hetty Wesley*, a story by 'Q.,' gives a vivid picture of the family life of the Wesleys.

friars; the English Church of Walpole's time would have nothing to do with Wesley, whose proceedings seemed to it to be mere 'enthusiasm,' marked by an unconventional novelty of method that did not seem respectable. It was but seldom that a parson would allow this earnest Oxford scholar to preach in his church; and all the best work of the new evangelists was done under the sky—in the streets of a town, on a bare hillside, in the yard of a gaol, from the roof of a pig-stye. And wherever they went, the crowds gathered about them and drank in their inspiring appeals as a parched soil drinks water. Often indeed riotous or drunken mobs assailed them; they were stoned, bruised and battered; but nothing deterred them. Their fearlessness generally awed the crowd into silence; and the amazing power which was wielded by their impassioned sincerity would melt the crowd to tears or reduce them to hysterics. Indefatigable, they travelled over all the roads and tracks of Britain and America afoot or on horseback, each covering on an average some five thousand miles a year. Wesley habitually preached twenty times a week year after year, beginning at five o'clock in the morning; and the audiences who listened to him sometimes numbered as many as thirty thousand at a time.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the influence that was wielded by this unending crusade—this unflagging inspired appeal to men of all types to rise above livelihood and think of life, to consider themselves not as drudges but as sons of God. All the dumb masses in all parts of the British Commonwealth were stirred and challenged to shake off the habit of taking for granted, to change their lives, to fix their thoughts on things beyond self. The three great leaders of the movement had each his special gifts. Whitefield was the inspired orator; he must have been one of the greatest that ever lived; he carried away worldlings like the polished Earl of Chesterfield when curiosity brought them to listen to him; and all his power, through all his life, was given up wholly to shaking men out of the self-complacent common sense upon which the age prided itself, and to challenging them to think of life and God and sin and the hereafter. Charles Wesley, the tenderest spirit of the three, was the poet of the movement; he produced a whole literature of hymns, simple, direct in their appeal, vibrant with emotion; set to ringing tunes, they had a great part in reshaping the mind and the emotion of a great part of the nation. John Wesley, besides being an unwearied

preacher of wonderful power, was the master-mind of the movement, and its supreme organiser. He gave to it a system which enabled its influence to go on working when the personal inspiration of the leaders was removed. Schools, mission-rooms, organisations for charity and for religious communion, and a huge army of lay-preachers sent out to do the work which the regular clergy of the Church neglected, all sprang into being under his untiring direction.

Wesley and the movement which he led were not suffered to remain in association with the national Church, and in the end a great new Dissenting sect, spread over every part of the British Commonwealth, was the outcome of his work; Whitefield, who differed from Wesley upon various theological points, became the organiser of another but much smaller sect; and there were other offshoots in course of time. These developments do not belong to the period with which we are concerned, when the vast movement was only beginning; nor was the creation of the Methodist bodies, important as it was, the most significant aspect of the work of these great evangelists. Their supreme gift to the Commonwealth was that they stirred the stagnant pools; that they called men to think of high issues; that they asserted the worth of all men, even the most neglected and degraded; that in a self-complacent and common-sense age they revived 'enthusiasm.'

Their work was only beginning when Britain found herself drawn into a world-wide conflict for maritime and colonial supremacy: 1739, the year in which Wesley was persuaded by Whitefield to preach in the fields to the colliers of Kingswood, was also the year in which Walpole was unwillingly forced into war with Spain; and while the evangelists were still wandering over all the roads of Britain, the long and straggling war was alternately kindling and dying down in Europe, on the seas, in America and in distant India. Nearly twenty years were to pass before the struggle achieved its climax of passionate patriotism under the proud guidance of Pitt, and national ardour was once more set aflame. Pitt and Wesley: the two men, different as they were, are in a strange way linked together. They were the two Great-hearts who slew the giant Sloth.

[Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*; Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*; Overton's, Tyerman's, or Southey's *Life of Wesley*; Wesley's *Journal* (included in Everyman's Library); Overton and Relton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*.]

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST PHASES OF THE GREAT CONFLICT FOR MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY

(A.D. 1739-1755)

§ 1. *The Opening of the Conflict.*

In 1739 Walpole was reluctantly forced into declaring war against Spain by the pressure of the parliamentary opposition and the strength of national feeling outside Parliament. In an often quoted pun the peace-loving minister expressed his view of the situation. 'They are ringing their bells now,' he said, as he listened to the public rejoicings; 'they will be wringing their hands soon.' He knew that the conflict would not long be limited to an easy maritime war against Spain. He foresaw French intervention, and the final destruction of the Franco-British alliance which had been the sheet-anchor of British foreign policy for so long, and had done so much to maintain European peace; above all he feared the possibility of an effective Franco-Spanish combination, which had been the worst nightmare of Whig statesmen for two generations.

That was as far as his imagination carried him. He refused to admit the inevitability of the vast conflict for maritime and colonial supremacy which was now opening. Indeed neither he nor his successors at all realised the importance of the colonial issue. In their eyes America was of no moment in comparison with the Balance of Power in Europe. Dominated by the memory of the war against Louis XIV., they allowed themselves to be drawn into the purely European controversy on the Austrian Succession, upon which they expended all their strength. The ruling politicians of France and Spain were equally blind; and the result was that the determination of the great issue was long delayed, and the fighting which began in 1739 lasted, almost without a break, for four-and-twenty years. If there was some wringing of hands as the long struggle dragged on, it was caused by the futility of

much of the fighting, not by any dubiety on the part of the British people as to the importance of the issues involved. How gigantic these issues were is shown by the fact that this was the first war in human history which was world-wide in its range : the New World and the Old, India, West Africa, the West Indies and the tribes of the American backwoods were all drawn into the conflict, until it reached the culminating fury of the years 1758-1760.

§ 2. *The Maritime War with Spain.*

The war with Spain, which began this long fever, was purely a maritime war, in which the naval supremacy of Britain ought to have given her an immediate and overwhelming advantage. But although Walpole had maintained the numbers of the navy at a pretty high level, its efficiency and moral had suffered during the long period of peace. The first action of the war was the despatch (1739) of a fleet under Admiral Vernon, with a land force, to attack Porto Bello and the isthmus of Panama—the strategic centre of the Spanish American empire. Porto Bello was easily captured. But it contained practically no plunder ; it was not held, though this would have dislocated the whole of the Spanish traffic from Peru. An attempt was next made to capture Cartagena, the chief town of the Spanish Main. Thanks to quarrels between the naval and military chiefs, the attempt was a disastrous failure, and a later attack on Santiago de Cuba was equally unsuccessful.

Meanwhile a small expedition under Anson (1740) was sent round Cape Horn to attack the west coast of Spanish South America. The original idea was that it should seize the treasure-fleets and also co-operate with Vernon, from the Pacific side, in getting control of the isthmus. But the squadron was scattered by violent tempests. When Anson had rallied the remnant at Robinson Crusoe's island of Juan Fernandez, he found himself with only three ships. With these he cruised along the South American coast, taking some prizes. He then made straight across the Pacific, hoping to capture two treasure galleons sent from Peru to Manila. By this time he was left with only one ship, but he succeeded in capturing a great galleon full of coin, and returned, like Drake, by the Cape of Good Hope. The expedition had terrified and embarrassed Spanish America. But it had no other result. It is remembered chiefly because of the courage with which all its successive misfortunes were

met and overcome.[1] That was in the best tradition of the British Navy.

These episodes were the only events of importance in the Spanish war; and although the destruction of merchant shipping went on actively on both sides, especially in West Indian waters, no attempt was made to strike a powerful blow at the almost defenceless Spanish empire. The futility and ill-success of these adventures were among the chief reasons for Walpole's fall in 1742. It is noteworthy that France had taken no part in these first stages of the conflict; the Family Compact of 1733 had in fact come to nothing. And the reason for this was that the governing politicians of France, like those of Britain, still undervalued the importance of oversea conflicts. Their eyes were fixed upon European affairs. And European affairs had come to a critical point in 1740, soon after the outbreak of the Anglo-Spanish war. These affairs were to distract the attention, not only of France, but presently also of Britain and Spain, from the main conflict beyond the seas.

§ 3. *The War of the Austrian Succession, and the Potency of Sea-Power.*

In 1740 two European sovereigns died. The first of these was Frederick William, King of Prussia. Frederick William's father, Frederick I., the son of the great Elector of Brandenburg, had gained the royal title (1700) as the price of his participation in the war against Louis XIV. Frederick William himself had acquired a strip of West Pomerania[2] as part of the plunder of Sweden on the downfall of Charles XII.; but he had been in general a peaceful monarch, devoting himself to perfecting the organisation of his absolute authority in his dominions, to the development of their material prosperity, and to the maintenance and training of a highly efficient army, altogether out of proportion to the size and resources of his dominions. This army was the most efficient military force in Europe; its upkeep was the chief concern of the Prussian State, whose material prosperity was cultivated primarily in order that it might bear this burden; and it was intended to be used as a weapon for carving out new dominions for the Prussian Crown. To the control of this powerful implement, on Frederick William's death, a new master succeeded: Frederick II., later known as Frederick

[1] *Anson's Voyage Round the World* is a stirring narrative, included in Everyman's Library.

[2] See the map of the growth of Prussia, Atlas, Plate 24 (*a*).

the Great,[1] who was to be the chief builder of the greatness of Prussia. A man of immense ability and devouring ambition, he was wholly free from inconvenient scruples; and he was eager to fish in troubled waters, or to stir them up if they were not otherwise disturbed. It was his intention to turn the small and poor State of Prussia, by force or by fraud, into one of the great States of Europe.

The desired troubling of the waters was provided by the death of Charles VI., Emperor by election, and by hereditary descent ruler of the scattered Habsburg domains, which took place soon after that of Frederick William. Charles VI. had no male heirs in the direct line, and we have seen how assiduously he had laboured to get the assent of all possible rival claimants, and of all the other European powers, to the Pragmatic Sanction, by which the undivided inheritance of his hereditary dominions was to pass to his daughter, Maria Theresa, a lady of infinite pride and courage. To the imperial crown, which the Habsburgs had held continuously since the fifteenth century, Maria Theresa, as a woman, could not succeed; it had to be disposed of by the eight electors. But Charles had hoped that his daughter's husband, Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Tuscany, would be elected. That depended upon the electors. But all that forethought could do Charles VI. had done; and if the pledged word of all the powers counted for anything, Maria Theresa would succeed to all the hereditary dominions of the Habsburg house. For all the States of Europe (save Bavaria, whose elector was one of the numerous claimants to the inheritance) had accepted the Pragmatic Sanction; notably Prussia, Spain, France, Britain, Russia and the minor states of the empire.

At first Maria Theresa succeeded quietly. Frederick of Prussia went out of his way to renew his father's pledge, and to promise himself and his army for the defence of the queen if they should be needed. But this was deliberate deception. Just before the end of the year, putting forward old claims to certain Silesian lands about which he made no attempt to negotiate, Frederick suddenly threw his army into the great and rich duchy of Silesia.[2] This precipitated a chaotic war. Frederick's boldness encouraged all the greedy claimants to the Habsburg inheritance to forget their pledges, and to treat the Pragmatic Sanction, as

[1] There is a life of Frederick the Great by W. F. Reddaway (*Heroes of the Nations*).

[2] See the maps, Atlas, Plates 10 and 24 (*a*).

Frederick had done, as a mere scrap of paper. France saw a chance to ruin the Habsburg house, her old rival. She had no claims of her own, but she intervened to secure the election of the Elector of Bavaria as Emperor, and sent her armies into the field to support him. The vultures were gathered round their prey. Only one of the greater signatories to the Pragmatic Sanction—Britain—remained faithful to the bond; the Dutch were half-hearted; Russia, distracted by a change of monarch, stood aloof.

Thus Maria Theresa had to fight for mere existence, supported only by small British, Hanoverian and (later) Dutch contingents, and by the aid of British money and the British navy. British statesmen, blinded by the resemblance of this struggle to the old continental war against Louis XIV., forgot oversea interests, and devoted themselves wholly to the sordid and complicated struggle in Europe. France and Spain equally forgot the world-conflict, though in 1743 they renewed the 'Family Compact' against Britain. France devoted all her efforts at first to supporting the Bavarian attack on Austria, and later to an attempt to conquer the Austrian Netherlands on her own account; Spain hoped to make herself mistress of Italy.

It is needless to trace in detail the course of this chaotic struggle. No common purpose bound together the robber powers save the desire for plunder; and they were not even united by a formal instrument of alliance. Frederick of Prussia was twice persuaded by British mediation to make peace with Maria Theresa on condition of being left in possession of Silesia, and twice, with characteristic perfidy, broke his word when it seemed to be in his interest to do so. The proud queen was loth to come to these agreements, because, with justice, she hated and distrusted Frederick more than any other of her foes; and he not only justified her distrust but earned also the distrust of his allies by the selfishness and faithlessness of his action. France was at first not even formally at war with Austria, but fought as the ally of Bavaria; nor did she make open war against Britain until 1744, though the armies of the two powers met one another in the field, the one as an ally of Austria, the other of Bavaria. The ruin of Austria was averted by three things: first by the lack of any common purpose or combined plan of action among her foes; secondly by the gallant response made by Maria Theresa's subjects, especially the Hungarians, to her appeals for their loyalty; and

thirdly by the power of the British Navy and of British subsidies, which alone kept the Austrian armies on foot.

Upon the fortunes of the British Commonwealth this confused and aimless struggle had very little direct effect. British armies once more appeared on the Continent. At the ill-planned but gallantly fought victory of Dettingen (1743), which is noteworthy as the last action wherein a British sovereign commanded in the field, they took part in a rather futile German campaign; after the definite opening of war with France, at the hard-fought but unsuccessful battle of Fontenoy (1745), they strove as in the old days to prevent French armies from conquering the Netherlands. Fontenoy is chiefly remembered because it was distinguished by an episode of romantic politeness which is often quoted as a proof of the sportsmanship and chivalry that marked the long series of fights between British and French troops. But there is something absurd in the spectacle of armies, busy upon the grim business of war, reproducing the elegant manners of the drawing-room and begging one another to fire first. Set against the background of the sordid and cynical policy displayed by most of the European governments, it has the unreality of the spurious chivalry of the Black Prince, who could wait on a captive king, but could also slaughter thousands of common men in cold blood.

So far as the war in Europe is concerned, its most important feature from the point of view of British history was the evidence it afforded of the potency of sea-power, and of the gradual revival of the strength and spirit of the British navy, which had been sapped by Walpole's régime. British ascendency upon the seas was now overwhelming, for the Dutch had fallen into the background, and both France and Spain had neglected their navies; even in mere numbers their combined forces were surpassed by those of Britain; and, badly as it was used, naval power markedly influenced the course of the war. Thus the mere presence of a British fleet in the Mediterranean led to results as important as great victories on land. In 1742 the Bourbon King of Naples had supplied 20,000 troops to help the Spaniards in their attack on the Austrian possessions in Northern Italy; but a British squadron, appearing off Naples, compelled the king to withdraw this contingent, and thus, without fighting, won a victory equivalent to the total destruction of an army of 20,000 men, and saved the situation in the north. Indeed the whole Spanish campaign in

Italy was gravely hampered by the fact that troops and supplies could not be sent by sea, but had to be sent round by land, through France and the Alpine passes. France, even while she was still formally at peace with Britain, gave the protection of her harbours to the Spanish fleet: she even ordered her fleet to convoy the Spanish warships into safety, and to resist any attack upon them by the British navy. This led to the only important naval action of the first part of the war, an action off Toulon (1744) between a British fleet and the combined fleets of France and Spain. It was indecisive, owing to the failure of the British rear-squadron to join in the battle; and it was followed by a whole series of courts-martial in which several British captains were cashiered. It thus led to a reorganisation of the navy, which was carried out by Anson as First Lord of the Admiralty, and to the promotion of younger officers of ability, such as Sir Edward Hawke; and in that way it helped to prepare the navy for the glorious part it was to play in the next war. But even this indecisive fight had the valuable strategic result of penning the French and Spanish fleets into harbour, and thus enabling the pressure of naval power to be brought to bear against the continental foes of Maria Theresa.

In the later phase of the struggle (1744-8), when France was formally at war with Britain, the war was more nearly brought home to the British people by the threat of a Jacobite rising, backed by a French invasion. The original plan was that an army of 15,000 men was to be transported into England from the Low Countries. This enterprise had been fixed for 1744. It was baffled by the mere presence of the British Channel fleet, though a storm which wrecked several of the transports that were lying off Dunkirk helped to show its futility; and when the gallant attempt of the Young Chevalier took place in the next year,[1] France was unable to give any assistance. The navy kept Britain secure, while at the same time it helped her continental allies, inflicted grave damage upon the commerce of France and therefore upon her strength for war, and protected the still growing trade of Britain, which gave her the means of maintaining the armies of her allies by large subsidies. Without the aid of the navy, it is all but certain that Maria Theresa must have been crushed. But neither she nor any of the continental statesmen, nor even the statesmen of Britain at home, realised these facts.

[1] See above, Chap. i. p. 659.

§ 4. *The Beginning of Franco-British Conflict Overseas.*

The navy might have rendered yet more decisive services by making possible a crushing attack upon the French colonies and oversea trading interests. Indeed, it had quite definitely placed this opportunity in the hands of the British government, if they had been able to realise it. During the years in which France and Britain were formally at war (1744-8) the French fleet never dared to challenge a full fleet action. But on two occasions in 1747 they sent out squadrons, one of eight, the other of nine ships, to convoy large numbers of merchant ships across the danger zone, and thus to keep French trade with the Indies alive. The first squadron was destroyed by Anson; the second was overwhelmed by Hawke. Thus the highways of the ocean were controlled by Britain, and there was nothing to prevent a vigorous attack upon the French oversea dominions such as Pitt later directed. But the Whig government, wholly engrossed in the European conflict, upon which it spent money like water, paid no attention to these opportunities.

Yet strife had broken out openly, both in India and in America, forced on by British and French rivalry in these fields. The Indian struggle was to have such strange and momentous consequences that it must be reserved for fuller treatment in a later chapter.[1] In the first phase of the struggle the honours fell to the French, though they were the weaker side, and they conquered the town of Madras, the main centre of British influence in Southern India. This result was wholly due to the fact that the Whig government failed to make use of British supremacy at sea, and even allowed the French to establish, for a time, the command of Eastern waters. It was the local agents of the rival companies who carried on the struggle in India; the home governments, on both sides, took little or no interest in it.

In America, likewise, it was by spontaneous local effort alone that the struggle was carried on. When the news of the outbreak of war with France reached America in 1745, the spirited governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, determined to deliver an attack against the French fortress of Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, which commanded the mouth of St. Lawrence. The troops for the expedition, 4000 in number, were raised wholly in the American colonies, and mainly in Massachusetts.

[1] Chapter viii. below, p. 759.

The home government was asked to do nothing save to despatch four ships from the West Indian squadron to guard the line of communications. Louisbourg was the most perfectly designed fortress in the New World, and it was garrisoned by some 2500 troops and as many able-bodied settlers. The attacking force had to be landed on a surf-beaten, rocky coast; all their guns and supplies had to be carried ashore in face of the enemy, and the ground on which they had to fight was marshy. Yet after a siege of five weeks they succeeded in compelling the fortress and the whole of its garrison to surrender. It was a brilliant achievement, and, although it would not have been possible without command of the sea, it reflected the greatest credit upon the courage and martial spirit of the New England militiamen who carried it out. It was the most brilliant military achievement of any British colony before the great revolt.

But the Whig government did not share the aggressive spirit of the colonists, and no use whatsoever was made of the opportunity thus offered. An attack vigorously pushed home at this juncture would almost certainly have resulted in an easy conquest of French Canada, but no such attack was made, or even projected. As we shall see, Louisbourg was tamely restored to France in 1748, to the indignation of the men of Massachusetts, who were further alienated from the mother country by this neglect of their achievement. It had to be reconquered later, with far greater difficulty. For the chief result of the temporary loss of Louisbourg was to awaken the French government to the importance of the American issue, and to lead them to use the years of peace in preparation for a new conflict.

In 1748 the dreary Austrian succession war was ended by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Its details need not concern us, for it was, and could be, no more than a truce. In Europe its chief result was that the perfidious Frederick of Prussia kept Silesia as the reward of his treacherous violence; but Austria submitted to this arrangement only with the deepest bitterness, and with an implacable resolve to redress the wrong on the earliest possible opportunity. Prussia and Austria had become rivals for the leadership of divided Germany, and that conflict had to be fought out afresh; during the eight years of restless peace which followed, both powers were preparing for a new struggle. That was the main result of the treaty so far as Europe was concerned; otherwise a return to the *status quo ante* was the

only outcome of these years of confused fighting. But in the other great conflict which had become entangled with the European squabble, the conflict between Britain and the two Bourbon powers for supremacy on the seas and beyond them, there was equally no decision. In spite of the sea-strength of Britain, which her Whig rulers had made no attempt to use, conquests were restored on both sides; Madras was given back to the East India Company in exchange for Louisbourg, handed back to France.

§ 5. *The Years of Nominal Peace*, 1748-1755.

The bargains of diplomatists at Aix-la-Chapelle could not restrain the development of conflict in the remote lands of East and West. Though a joint Boundary Commission was appointed by Britain and France in 1750, and continued its sittings till 1755, its deliberations led to no practical result. It was a promising sign of the growth of willingness to settle disputes by peaceful means. But the conflict of interests was too sharp to be thus treated; and both in India and in North America the eight years of nominal peace which followed the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle were filled with the warfare of the rival nations—a warfare not dictated or guided by the governments at home, but arising almost inevitably out of the local conditions. Both in India and in America the initiative was taken by the French, whose Indian and Canadian representatives were definitely labouring during these years to lay the foundations of grandiose empires. In both lands French action drove the local representatives of British interests to take counter action, and gradually forced the reluctant home government to take up their cause. We shall have to deal with the Indian struggle in a later chapter. But it was the increasing intensity of the struggle in America which mainly forced the hands of the home governments, and brought about an open state of war, just at the time when the development of European politics had made a new conflict in Europe inevitable. Our concern in this chapter is to observe how the pressure of events, first in America, and secondly in Europe, were stultifying the futilities of the last war and the inconclusive treaty which had ended it.

The governors of French Canada during these years were quite manifestly looking forward to and preparing for a bold attempt to break the British power in America. Such a challenge might appear mere insanity, since the French

settlers were overwhelmingly outnumbered by the British settlers. But the French had many advantages. They were nearly all adventurers and trained backwoods fighting men, while the British settlers were mostly farmers and traders. They were in friendly relations with the Indian tribes, whom the British had (with the important exception of the Iroquois) generally neglected. All the resources of France in the New World were at the disposal of a single absolute government; whereas the British were divided into thirteen distinct colonies, mutually jealous and unwilling to co-operate, and in each colony the authority of the governor was generally made ineffectual by the often short-sighted policy of the representative assembly. Self-government seemed to threaten ruin to the British, by causing inefficiency, division and infirmity of purpose. The centralisation of autocracy gave to the French a chance of carrying on the struggle on more equal terms, a chance even of victory. Yet ultimately the supreme question at issue was the question whether the principles of self-government or those of autocracy were to control the destinies of the New World.

During the years following the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle the conflict became acute in two regions; in Acadia, and in the Ohio Valley.[1] Having regained Louisbourg, the French strengthened its fortifications and increased its garrison. The British government, realising, as soon as they had abandoned it, the importance of the fortress and the threat which it offered to Acadia, in 1749 organised a new fort and naval base at Halifax on the Acadian coast, with a garrison of 3000 men. This was the first British settlement in that region, the population of which, numbering some 8000, were all French. The French peasants had been well treated ever since Acadia became a British possession in 1713; their religion had been undisturbed, their rights of property, their laws of inheritance, had not been meddled with; and, left to themselves, they would probably have been content enough. But just beyond the isthmus, in a region which had always before 1713 been regarded as part of Acadia, the French maintained garrisoned forts which were a perpetual reminder of the old loyalty to the French Crown. Every influence was exercised upon the Acadian peasantry to persuade them that their obedience was still due to the King of France; above all, the powerful influence of the

[1] See the maps: for Acadia, Atlas, Plate 54; for the Ohio Valley, Plate 55.

priesthood was employed to impress upon them the religious obligation of loyalty to the Catholic king. They were even warned that the Red Indians who haunted the woods would be turned upon them if they took or observed the oath of allegiance to the British Crown. One of the leaders among the French missionary priests, the Abbé le Loutre, actually offered and paid bounties to the Indians, during this period of peace, for every British scalp they brought in. British soldiers' lives were unsafe on British territory a mile from the walls of their forts. Thus the small British settlement at Halifax felt itself extremely insecure, and necessarily regarded all the surrounding population as potential foes, not to be trusted. The result was that in 1755, when open war between the French and English began, the British administrators of Nova Scotia felt that they could not safely leave themselves at the mercy of a hostile population; and, after several ineffectual warnings, some 8000 of the French population were deported to the British colonies farther south.[1] The removal was a cruel thing; but it certainly was not without justification.

Meanwhile the French had resolved to occupy and fortify the Ohio Valley, which lay just behind the line of the Alleghany Mountains. There had hitherto been no French settlement in this region. But some of the more enterprising of the British settlers were beginning to find their way over the hills, and were opening up trade relations with the Indians: they came mainly from Virginia, through the Cumberland Gap,[2] which offered the easiest passage through the mountains. The British colonies vaguely claimed the right to extend indefinitely westwards: the French, on the strength of their exploration of the Mississippi Valley, and of the few small posts which they had planted in the wilderness, hundreds of miles to the west, claimed possession of the whole of the vast central plain. In 1749—the year after the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle—the French Governor of Canada sent an expedition to explore the Ohio Valley, and to claim it for France. At some points they buried leaden plates containing assertions of French dominion; at others they nailed shields bearing the French arms to a few trees; they got into relations with Indian tribes, and told them that the King of France was their father; they expelled British traders, and sent formal letters

[1] This is the episode which forms the theme of Longfellow's *Evangeline*.
[2] See the map, Atlas, Plate 55.

to the British governors to complain of their poaching upon French preserves.

The expelled traders and the letters of complaint ought to have shown the colonists that the French danger was a real one. Most of the colonists were apathetic. But the enterprising Scottish deputy-governor of Virginia, Robert Dinwiddie, resolved to take action. In 1753 he sent a capable young Virginian squire, George Washington, then twenty-two years old, to warn off the French in their turn as interlopers. But a warning of this kind was not likely to have the least effect, unless it were made clear to the French that it would be supported by force. Dinwiddie and other governors wrote urgent despatches to the home government begging them to realise the seriousness of the issue. The home government replied permitting the governors to repel force with force, and urging the colonies to take common action and to negotiate jointly with the Iroquois Indians to secure their co-operation in checking any French attacks. Their view was that the colonists ought to be able to defend themselves.

The result of this was twofold. In the first place, a handful of Virginians was sent to build a woodland fort at the junction of the rivers Monongahela and Alleghany, where Pittsburg stands to-day; and this fort, the first attempt to secure British control over the Ohio Valley, was to become in the near future the centre of furious fighting.

The second result was even more important. A conference of representatives of all the colonies was summoned to meet at Albany in New York, the nearest point to the Iroquois country. The conference met in 1754. It was the first attempt at common action on the part of the colonies, and under the lead of Benjamin Franklin, who represented Pennsylvania, it was proposed that a close federation of the colonies should be organised, with a President and a Grand Council which should be empowered to demand from each colony its proper contribution in men and money towards the needs of the common defence. Had this scheme been adopted it would have anticipated, by a union under the British Crown, the union into which the colonies were later forced in opposition to the Crown, and it might have altered the whole course of the history of the Commonwealth. But the assemblies of the individual colonies were too jealous of their powers, and too unready to realise their common interests. They unanimously rejected the scheme, and thus thrust upon the home government the responsibility for

organising and directing—and incidentally for paying the cost of—the common effort.

Meanwhile the crisis of the struggle was drawing nearer. In 1753, the year in which Virginia pioneers were building their fort, the French had erected a fort at Presqu'ile on Lake Erie, and cut a road through the forests to the upper waters of the Alleghany. Marching down by this route, they easily drove out the rustic levies from the rude fort at the river junction. Next year (1754), while the congress was sitting at Albany, Washington was sent with some four hundred men to regain the post. A skirmish between his force and a small body of Frenchmen, in which the French leader was killed, drew the first blood in the great conflict, and caused a great stir both in America and in Europe. It set both the French and the British governments to work, and persuaded them that they must take definite action. But before anything could be done by the home authorities, Washington's force, attacked by overwhelming numbers, was compelled to surrender. At the very moment when the colonies were refusing to take common action, the French, under the direction of their centralised government, had won the mastery of the Ohio Valley. They rebuilt and strengthened the fort at the river junction, and gave to it the name of Fort Duquesne in honour of the Governor of Canada.

The British government still hoped that the colonies would provide the bulk of the forces and the money required for their own defence. In 1755 it appointed a general of experience, General Edward Braddock, to take command of all the forces, and supplied him with two regiments of regulars—1400 men—to form a nucleus for a colonial army. But it was hoped that each of the colonies would appoint a commission to consult with him as to the contingents and supplies which each colony ought to provide, and that, even if the colonies would not accept the decisions of a common representative body, they would individually vote what was required. This hope was destined to be disappointed; the main burden, and the whole responsibility of planning and leadership, were left to the mother country; and when Braddock reached America he found that little help was forthcoming.

While the British authorities were pinning their hopes upon colonial co-operation, the French government was despatching an army of 3000 men under a practised German captain, Dieskau, to help the Canadian settlers in striking directly

at the heart of the British colonies by way of the great waterway of Lake Champlain and the Hudson river. Aware of the despatch of this force, the British government told off Admiral Boscawen to intercept it at the mouth of the St. Lawrence ; it only escaped him by the aid of a fog.

Thus in 1755, though Britain and France were still nominally at peace, and were not to declare formal war for another year, elaborate campaigns by regular troops were being planned and carried out. The war really began in 1755 ; and we shall take the campaigns of that year as the starting-point of the narrative of the great conflict which will occupy the next chapter.

Meanwhile the mutual fears of the European States were bringing about a new grouping of the powers which was to have a very direct effect upon the coming conflict. And in Britain the course of domestic politics was raising the question of the leadership under which the conflict was to be fought. It is necessary to survey both of these developments before we deal with the final grapple.

§ 6. *The Diplomatic Revolution of* 1756.

Just as the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was important rather as the beginning of acute colonial rivalry between France and Britain than as a solution of their differences, so on the continent of Europe also it opened a period of general nervousness and of preparation for a new struggle. The centre of unrest was Frederick the Great of Prussia, who, having benefited from the last war by the seizure of Silesia, was generally believed to be aiming at a further disturbance of the Balance of Power to his own advantage. The suspicion was justified. In a political testament which he wrote in 1752, when he believed himself to be at the point of death, he had urged upon his successor the necessity of rounding off the ill-compacted territories of Prussia by annexing West Prussia from Poland, and, still more important, by seizing the Electorate of Saxony.[1] The former aim he was to achieve by engineering the iniquitous partition of Poland in 1772; the latter he attempted at the beginning of the Seven Years' War in 1756. Naturally the suspicion of these designs increased the distrust with which his behaviour since 1740 had led him to be regarded.

On the other hand, Maria Theresa of Austria burned for vengeance against him, and longed to regain Silesia. But

[1] See the map of the Growth of Prussia, Atlas, Plate 23 (*a*).

to ensure success she must be safeguarded against a hostile combination such as had faced her in the last war. The most skilful of the Austrian diplomatists, Kaunitz, strongly held that the way to achieve this end was to reverse the traditions which had governed European politics for two centuries, and to make an alliance between Austria and France, while maintaining a close friendship with the new great power of Russia. So far as Russia was concerned the programme was easy; for the Tsarina Elizabeth, who now ruled Russia, had a personal detestation for Frederick, and personal feelings of this kind counted for a great deal in the policy of despotic courts. But it was more difficult to win over France; and from 1750 onwards Kaunitz, as ambassador at Paris, seemed to be labouring in vain, until in 1756 there came about a sudden reversal in the European situation.

France, indeed, was a very uncertain quantity in these years. Her absolute sovereign, Louis XV., was a lazy debauchee, who would neither himself determine the lines of national policy as Louis XIV. had always done, nor trust a single minister. He was largely influenced by his mistress, Madame de Pompadour; under his and her lax and shameless régime, the government of France fell into gross incompetence and corruption, and absolute monarchy showed itself at its worst. In a vague way French ministers and politicians felt that the looming conflict with the British power ought to be the chief concern of French policy, and they did a good deal to strengthen the French navy during these years of peace. But there was an even greater lack of firm and clear foresight in France than there was in Britain; the energy and devotion of French agents in India and even in America were wasted, because they received little support or encouragement from home. Thus in 1754 the great Dupleix, who had almost without assistance laid the foundations of a French empire in India, was ignominiously recalled. And while the French governors in Canada were encouraged to initiate an aggressive policy which could only end in war, and were even supplied with troops to carry it out, no adequate preparations were made at home to face the conflict which was thus being forced on. Spain, France's natural ally, was pursuing a pacific policy; and, far from being able to count upon Spanish help in the coming conflict, France had to witness the triumph of British diplomacy at Madrid, which reduced the Family Compact once more to a nullity. Though French statesmen realised

the probability of war, they made no clear plans as to the way in which it should be conducted. Their main idea seems to have been that of an attack upon Hanover by land, in the hope of either forcing Britain to accept French terms, or gaining a compensation for colonial losses. For an attack on Hanover an alliance with Prussia, Hanover's neighbour to the east, would be useful; and for that reason the proposed alliance with Austria was at first unattractive, since it would involve enmity with Prussia. At the same time France was by no means prepared to help Frederick in his aggressive schemes; and Frederick, who despised the nervelessness and incompetence of the French government, put no confidence in the French alliance.

Meanwhile the British government, under the fussy and incompetent Duke of Newcastle, was in a state of equally nerveless indecision. It wanted to avoid war; it showed no energy in preparing for it; yet it felt that war was almost inevitably coming, and, in accordance with the traditions of the last generation, its chief preoccupation was to secure the safety of Hanover should the war come. Hanover had to be protected against France. But it was also endangered by Prussia, its neighbour on the east, whose cynical greed everybody feared. Tradition suggested a renewal of the old alliance with Austria. Newcastle accordingly opened negotiations with Austria to secure a guarantee for Hanover. Austria was ready to give the guarantee, but only on one condition—that she should be supplied with subsidies sufficient to enable her to attack Prussia and reconquer Silesia. But that would mean that the hornet's nest would be stirred. It was security, not war, that Britain wanted on the continent: she declined to lend herself to the Austrian project, and so the long alliance with Austria came to an end.

During 1754, and still more during 1755, when actual war was already raging in America, Newcastle, all anxiety for Hanover, was desperately touting for European alliances. He tried Russia, and made an agreement whereby Russia was to attack Prussia if Prussia attacked Hanover. But, after all, the best safeguard against Prussia might be an alliance with Prussia herself, and to this idea Newcastle eventually resorted. Frederick welcomed the project. In the war which he was preparing for it would be a great gain to have his flank protected by a friendly Hanover. So in January 1756 a convention was signed at Westminster, whereby Britain and Prussia mutually guaranteed one

another's possessions. Thus, at the opening of the great conflict, the needs of Hanover once more involved Britain in European complications.

The Convention of Westminster at once brought about a change in the attitude of France. Feeling that it had been deserted by Prussia, her government listened at last to the urgency of Kaunitz; and in May 1756 a treaty was made between France and Austria, whereby France undertook to provide troops and subsidies for Austria, and so committed herself to participation in a great European war. This was the beginning of an alliance which lasted for a generation, and brought nothing but disaster to France. It was also the foundation of a great league of States which Austria gradually built up for the overthrow of the malignant trickster of Berlin. She was already sure of the friendship of Russia. Soon Sweden and the minor States of the Empire were to join in a coalition by which it might be confidently expected that Frederick would be overwhelmed. For Frederick's only ally was Britain, a power which could not put large armies in the field, and which was certain to be distracted by demands elsewhere. Thus it appeared in 1756 that, once more, the main issues of the great conflict were going to be lost sight of, both by France and by Britain.

Frederick knew his danger. The coalition against him was not yet formed, but it was forming. In August 1756 he suddenly flung his great army at Saxony, the neighbour State which he desired to annex; shut up the little Saxon army at Pirna; checked an Austrian attempt to relieve it; forced it not merely to capitulate but to take service under his own standard; and thus started the war in control of all the resources of Saxony, as he had started the previous war by the seizure of Silesia.

Newcastle had hoped to keep things quiet in Europe while the struggle with France lasted; his alliance with Prussia had been meant to safeguard Hanover, not to expose it to great dangers. But he had reckoned without his formidable ally; and now Britain found herself saddled with a European war in addition to the gigantic conflict on the seas and in America and India into which she had been drawn, and in which, as we shall see, she had as yet met with nothing but disasters. At the end of 1756, while Frederick was enjoying his Saxon triumph, Britain seemed to be involved in the most dangerous crisis of her history. And her Whig leaders were helpless to extricate her from it.

§ 7. *British Politics and the Great Conflict: Emergence of Pitt.*

The government which had directed British policy during the greater part of the War of the Austrian Succession and the first six years of the peace had been the 'Broad-bottom' ministry of Henry Pelham, which had included every faction and had been almost unopposed. Even the stormy figure of Pitt, who had thundered against the subordination of British interests to those of Hanover in Walpole's time and in Carteret's, had been content to serve under Pelham for eight years as Paymaster of the Forces, in an office which carried no political authority. In domestic politics the period was the most stagnant in British history. But though in form a national ministry, Pelham's administration had in fact been governed by the traditions of Whig foreign policy; and it was under its nerveless guidance that Britain had drifted into the crisis in which she now found herself. The 'old system,' as they called it, of constant preoccupation with the Balance of Power in Europe, of alliances and subsidies mainly designed for the protection of Hanover, and of disregard of colonial needs and dangers, continued without a breach. And the dominating influences in British politics were still patronage and borough influence, the management of which was the chief concern of ministers.

In 1754 Henry Pelham died, and the 'Broad-bottom' administration, which his suavity had held together, broke up. His place was taken by his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, king of borough-mongers and past-master of the arts of political corruption; the very type of Whig oligarchy at its worst. As Secretary of State, Newcastle had long been deeply concerned in the endless web of European diplomacy; he was the greatest believer in the supreme importance of the European Balance of Power, and in the possibility of maintaining it by a constant patching up of subsidy-treaties. But 1754, the year in which this ministerial change came about, was also the year in which war flamed out in the backwoods of America, and in which Britain was forced to realise that she was face to face with a great crisis in her history. Newcastle was manifestly not the man to guide her through this crisis. He was obstinately blind to colonial problems, though he had been concerned with them for a generation. For him, more fully even than for the other politicians of his generation, politics meant nothing more than the futilities of European diplomacy, and the sordidness of parliamentary

'management.' In forming his ministry he had no thought but for the placating of interests and the enlisting of pliant tools; with the result that in a crisis of her fate Britain found herself under the most feeble and incompetent administration to which she had ever had to submit.

But happily there was not lacking an effective opposition, capable of expressing the national distrust and arousing the national spirit. William Pitt, who had long chafed at his exclusion from real political influence, found himself shut out under the new arrangement from every prospect of promotion. He passed into opposition, and once more, as in the days of the opposition to Walpole and Carteret, his trumpet-voice—the only voice in British politics that could penetrate the muffled walls of the House of Commons and make itself somehow heard by the whole nation—was thundering against the blindness and incompetence that were leading the nation to ruin. As disaster followed disaster during the dark days of 1755 and 1756, Pitt's denunciations grew more formidable; and the nation learnt to regard him as the one leader capable of saving it from what seemed utter ruin. Newcastle's feebleness and lack of courage, and the long succession of defeats which followed from them, had thus much of compensation that they broke down the barriers of oligarchic self-complacency, and brought to the service and leadership of the nation the greatest governing mind which it had produced since Cromwell.

William Pitt[1] was in 1756 forty-eight years old; and though he had devoted all his energies to political life for twenty years, he had never yet enjoyed any experience of political power. As a member of a little group of friends led by Lord Cobham, and including the ambitious Grenville brothers whose sister he married in 1754, he had first distinguished himself by the vigour and power of his opposition to Walpole from 1735 onwards. In the course of this campaign he had been deeply influenced by some of Bolingbroke's doctrines, though he learnt to mistrust the man himself. But always his main themes had been the supreme value to Britain of a right use of her naval power, the dominating importance of maritime and colonial questions, and the folly and wastefulness of allowing British foreign policy to be dictated by the needs of Hanover, and to be enmeshed in

[1] The standard life of Pitt is by Basil Williams, in two volumes; an admirable piece of work. There is a short life by Frederic Harrison in the Twelve English Statesmen Series.

the complexities of European affairs. Inspired by these ideas, he had been among the most active influences in forcing Walpole into war in 1739 ; and he had been unsparing in his invective against the way in which the war had been conducted first by Walpole and then by Carteret. The vigour and power of his eloquence had won him a remarkable position even in those early days. He had completely dominated the House of Commons ; he had become a popular hero ; he was known throughout Europe. French agents thought it worth while to write home about his speeches ; and the Prussian envoy reported to his master in 1746 that Pitt was ' the greatest orator in the House of Commons . . . a man universally beloved by the nation.' And this great position he had won solely by his eloquence and courage, since he possessed neither wealth nor great rank nor borough influence.

In 1746 Pitt had abandoned opposition to become Paymaster of the Forces under Pelham, and at first this acceptance of an office out of which eighteenth-century politicians were accustomed to make great fortunes had damaged his reputation. But Pitt, though he was a poor man, had signalised his tenure of the office by refusing to take advantage of the chances of money-making which it offered, and which all his contemporaries regarded as perfectly legitimate. He had declined to accept the usual commission on subsidies paid out of his office to foreign armies ; he had refused to earn interest by lending the large balances which remained in his hands ; he had done much to check waste and peculation. In office he had shown that he had been sincere in the denunciations of corruption which he had made when in opposition. But his supreme desire was to have the chance of exercising in the service of his country the great powers he was conscious of possessing ; and the Pelhams, though they often consulted him and sometimes followed his advice, never offered him an office of cabinet rank. He was excluded from power in part because the king could not forgive his anti-Hanoverian speeches. But that was not the only or the main reason. He was excluded because he lacked ' influence,' because he controlled no borough votes. Now he was to show that, even in the conditions of eighteenth-century politics, the man who could at a time of national crisis win the confidence and trust of the nation might with that support make head even against the entrenched power of the Whig oligarchy.

The personality of this great man, who dominated his

era and became the inspirer and the spokesman of a new imperial conception in British politics, was far indeed from being flawless. He was absurdly theatrical in his methods. He was a domineering colleague, impatient of contradiction and very difficult to work with. Even those who believed in him most fervently often found their loyalty strained by the atmosphere of Olympian mystery in which he loved to envelop himself. He had no clearly thought-out political principles, and was constantly guilty of inconsistencies. His intellectual equipment for the great task of government was in many respects defective. But no one could doubt or deny the passionate intensity of his patriotism, the boldness and courage of his imagination, or his superb confidence in the British people and in himself. 'I know that I can save my country and that no one else can,' he said; and such was his power of inspiring confidence that in his mouth the phrase did not seem boastful. What made him different from his contemporaries, and what commanded the devotion of the nation, was that he was patently inspired by intense and sincere beliefs. He believed in his country and in the greatness of its destiny; and he believed in liberty, without being able to define it. These two beliefs were with him fused in one; for England was for him the mother of liberty, and her triumph the triumph of freedom. And it was the intensity of his faith, as well as his proud confidence and courage, which enabled him to inspire those whom he led, and to awaken in the nation an ardour long since forgotten. Fortunately for his country he was richly endowed with all the gifts that could enable his eager spirit to achieve the leadership it deserved. A noble presence, a hawk-like face, an eye that could scorch and terrify, a voice of silver, a marvellous command of every resource of masculine eloquence, enabled him to dominate the House of Commons as it has never been dominated before or since, and, even in those days of unreported debates, to impress upon the mind of the nation some image of his flaming power. 'England has been long in labour, but at last she has produced a Man,' said Frederick the Great. The crisis had come towards which all the long development of the nation's oversea activities had pointed; and with it had come the Man, to awaken the nation from its lethargy. As his latest and best biographer has said, 'the Great Commoner's chief glory is not to have won an Empire, but to have united a people,' and even during the dark years of failure with which, as we shall see, the great conflict opened,

Pitt's courage and confidence, and the vigour with which he denounced the incompetence to which the failure was due, were rendering the great service of awakening and uniting the nation.

[Hassall's *Balance of Power* for a summary of European affairs; Marriott and Robertson's *Rise of Prussia*; Atkinson's *History of Germany in the Eighteenth Century*; Ward's *England and Hanover*; Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*; Beer's *British Colonial Policy, 1754-65*; Egerton's *British Colonial Policy*; Bradley's *Conquest of Canada*; Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*; Robertson's *England under the Hanoverians*; Williams' *William Pitt*.]

CHAPTER VII

WILLIAM PITT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY

(A.D. 1755-1763)

§ 1. *The Dark Days.*

In the spring of 1755 General Edward Braddock, a brave and honest soldier, trained in the methods of continental warfare, but strange to those of the backwoods, arrived in Virginia with two regiments to take command of an expedition for the recovery of the Ohio Valley. He had expected to be joined by large colonial forces; but only 600 irregular troops could be obtained, and these had to be paid out of the British exchequer. Even the requisite wagons and supplies could only be obtained with the greatest difficulty. Braddock has been blamed for his lack of sympathy with the colonists. His impatience is not surprising.

In June he set out with his little force over the Cumberland Gap, upon a march of more than 100 miles through a trackless wilderness to Fort Duquesne.[1] The woods swarmed with Indians in the French service; there were no Indians on the British side. Nine miles from Fort Duquesne Braddock, who had gone forward with 1400 of his best men, was ambushed in the woods by some 800 Indians and Canadians, an invisible enemy, firing from behind trees and bushy ridges upon a compact mass of well drilled men in parade formation. The doomed force stood their ground, firing wildly at their unseen foes, and were shot down as they stood. Braddock himself was killed; only a remnant of his force was extricated by the skill of young Washington. Not only was the mastery of the Ohio Valley secured to the French, but the frontiers of the British colonies lay open to their attacks, and to the bloodthirsty raids of the Indian tribes, nearly all of whom eagerly joined the winning cause. That was the first event of the great conflict. The only force of regular troops in the colonies had been obliterated. The

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 55. This map should be used throughout the present chapter.

threatened colonies themselves were doing almost nothing for their own defence.

Meanwhile, in the north, the French (who disposed of 5000 regular troops as well as the whole armed manhood of Canada) were preparing to advance down Lake Champlain and the Hudson Valley[1] to isolate New England from the southern colonies. The New Englanders, more vigorous than their southern neighbours, raised 6000 men to meet this danger, and placed them under the command of Sir William Johnson, an active Irishman, who had great influence among the Iroquois. They too, in their turn, were ambushed by the French on Lake George, and only escaped a disaster like Braddock's because, not being held together by army discipline, and knowing the woods, they were able to make their escape. After re-forming, they managed to beat back a new French attack. But when the campaign ended they only held the forts at the foot of Lake George, guarding the access to the Hudson Valley. The French, based upon their great forts at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, were superior in numbers and in readiness for war, and threatened to break down the resistance in the next campaign.

The first formal campaign in America, that of 1755, had thus been disastrous to the British cause; the victory of the French seemed to be assured; and during the winter the frontier lands of Virginia and Pennsylvania were terrorised by Indian attacks, in which hundreds of men, women and children were slaughtered. Washington, with a mere handful of men, could not protect a frontier 400 miles long, though he did his best. Yet the colonial authorities remained for the most part lethargic, waiting for British help: the legislature of Pennsylvania refused to vote a dollar or a man for the public defence.

This was bad enough news. But soon worse was to come. At home there were threats of a French invasion: French troops were mustering in the Channel, and the dockyards of Brest were busy. The British navy was widely scattered and undermanned; the French navy, though it was largely outnumbered, was in home ports and seemed to be all available for action. British ships had to be withdrawn from the Mediterranean to guard against the danger nearer home. That was what the French wanted. Suddenly and secretly, in April 1756, without a declaration of war, a French fleet, convoying the Duke of Richelieu in command of 15,000

[1] See the map of the Hudson Valley, Atlas, Plate 56 (*a*).

troops in 150 transports, was sent out from Toulon against Minorca. The surprise was complete. The Governor of Minorca, and the colonels of all the regiments in the garrison of 3000, were away on leave. Port Mahon was besieged. Its defences were breached and its fall seemed all but certain when, late in May, Admiral Byng arrived from England with a fleet practically equal in numbers to the French fleet. Had Byng been able to destroy the opposing fleet, Richelieu and his army would have been as good as lost, even if they captured Fort Mahon. Byng fought a straggling indecisive battle, in which he got slightly the worse; and then drew off, falling back on Gibraltar, and leaving Minorca to its fate. Port Mahon fell at the end of June. In November of the same year France also got control of the island of Corsica, from the republic of Genoa. Toulon, Corsica and Minorca seemed to give her command of the Mediterranean.

The consternation which these events caused in Britain surpassed even the painful impression produced by the disasters in America. Minorca had been since 1708 the main British naval base in the Mediterranean. The great struggle had been opened with the gravest blow which had been struck at British naval power since the battle of Beachy Head in 1690. And on naval power the very existence of Britain, as well as the possibility of success in America, wholly depended. Byng was recalled, and tried by court-martial. He was found guilty, not of cowardice, but of not doing his utmost to save Minorca; and, as the articles of war required, was condemned to death, though with a recommendation to mercy. Popular clamour, inspired by panic, demanded his execution, *pour encourager les autres*.

While the excitement over Minorca was at its height in England, both French and British were addressing themselves to the situation in America. France sent out the Marquis de Montcalm, a soldier of infinite courage and great ability, worth many regiments, to take command of the operations; and with him 1200 fresh troops. The Duke of Newcastle sent Lord Loudoun, a respectable soldier of rank, but easily disheartened and wholly lacking in capacity and enterprise; to add to the shattered remnants of Braddock's force, and to face the 7000 regulars whom Montcalm commanded, he was given one regiment of 900 men. He was joined by several thousand colonials, mainly raised in New England; but they were mostly untrained men. Each colony jealously controlled its own contingents; and there

was constant friction among the colonial leaders, as well as between them and the British officers.

It is not surprising that under these circumstances the campaign of 1756 went badly in America. The only surprising thing is that it did not end in sheer disaster. In the Ohio Valley nothing was done: Virginia and Pennsylvania would not provide any troops; all that was possible was to defend the shrunken frontiers. Further north Montcalm seized and destroyed the fort of Oswego, the only British fort on the Great Lakes. It lay in the friendly Iroquois country, and was approached by the Mohawk Valley from Albany. Its loss left the line of advance by the Mohawk open to the French. On Lake George there was deadlock. While Loudoun strengthened the British forts (Edward and William Henry) and built a flotilla of boats for use on the Lake, Montcalm was similarly engaged; and though there was a great deal of picturesque dare-devil fighting by the frontiersmen on both sides, the French still held the upper hand. There was no gleam of success for the British side in America in 1756.

Nor was it much of a consolation that our sole continental ally, Frederick of Prussia, had treacherously seized Saxony and begun the continental struggle. That only ensured that there would be desperate doings on the Continent, and that an expedition must be sent to defend Hanover; which it might seem would ensure the continued neglect of the great issue in America. And another disaster had happened in the Far East, though this was fortunately not yet known at home; the news did not reach England till June 1757. Siraj-uddaula, the Nawab of Bengal, had suddenly turned against the English, and had captured Calcutta, many of whose wretched refugees were starving on an island at the mouth of the Ganges while others had died in the Black Hole.

§ 2. *Pitt's Opportunity, and his Preparations.*

One good result was, however, produced by these disasters. The Duke of Newcastle, bowing before the storm of public reprobation which even his willingness to offer Byng as a sacrifice could not allay, resigned his office; and George II. had to call upon Pitt to form a ministry, though he feared and distrusted the Great Commoner because of his declared hostility to fighting in the interests of Hanover. This was in December 1756. Pitt managed to form a ministry independent of corrupt influence, with the respectable Duke

of Devonshire as its nominal head. In the four months that followed he worked with desperate energy, planning and preparing vigorous action to retrieve the situation. The record of his activities in these months shows not merely immense industry and vigour, but a width of outlook and a boldness of conception which had hitherto been wholly lacking in the direction of British policy. America was to be the main field of operations. Large forces were sent to Loudoun; backed by a big fleet, he was to challenge the French by a direct attack on Louisbourg and Quebec, while the colonies were to be stimulated and assisted to find sufficient forces to hold their ground at the other threatened points. The whole naval forces of Britain were to be boldly employed, primarily to blockade the French fleets and prevent them from sending assistance, secondarily to attack the French possessions in the West Indies and in West Africa. A new Militia Act was to be passed to raise forces for home defence, thus releasing all the available regular troops for foreign service. The valour of the Highland clans which had been recently in rebellion was to be employed by the enlistment of new regular regiments among them.[1] Attacks were to be made on the coast of France to distract French forces from other fields of conflict; British forces suddenly landed from the sea would, it was hoped, keep all France in terror, since she could never know where to expect attack. Germany was not to be neglected: Prussia was in any case our ally, and an army of observation in Hanover would give occupation to the French, and thus help the main struggle in America. All these bold and many-sided but convergent plans, to which Pitt adhered throughout his conduct of the war, were already being prepared during these active months. The dæmonic energy of the man, though it had not yet had time to show itself in action, soon made itself felt in all the departments of government; and the new strenuousness and activity perceptible on all sides produced its effects upon the nation, and increased its confidence in the minister. What made all this more wonderful was that throughout these strenuous months Pitt was almost crippled by the agonies of gout.

But Pitt was not yet to be allowed freedom to carry out his great designs. His ministry was a one-man ministry, and though he commanded the devoted support of the independent country gentlemen and of the city merchants,

[1] Regiments from among the loyal clans had been enlisted as early as 1739.

he had no stable majority in the House of Commons. All the groups and cliques of borough-mongers were against him. The legion of government votes which the Duke of Newcastle had long controlled was not to be trusted, and the oligarchy was only waiting till popular fury should die down to return to power. Even popular support was alienated when it became known that Pitt was insisting that Admiral Byng ought not to be shot. The king refused to pardon Byng. 'You have taught me,' he said, when Pitt urged that the House of Commons was in favour of pardon, 'to look elsewhere for the sense of my people than to the House of Commons,' and the unfortunate admiral was shot amid public rejoicings. George II., indeed, had no love for Pitt, and was only anxious to be rid of this critic of Hanover politics. When the Duke of Cumberland, who was to take command of the army in Hanover, refused to serve unless Pitt was dismissed, the king thought that the public craze for the minister had weakened sufficiently to make it safe to dismiss him; and he received his *congé* in April 1757.

Thus, at a grave crisis, the nation was deprived of the only leadership that could save it. But no one could be found who was willing to accept the responsibility of making a new ministry; and during eleven fateful weeks (April-June, 1757) there was no organised government at all. The indignation of the whole people, or of every part of it capable of forming a judgment, was made very apparent. Any doubt as to Pitt's command over the public imagination was dispelled by a rain of petitions and addresses. No less than nineteen towns, headed by the city of London, voted him the freedom, enclosing the certificates in gold boxes: 'it rained gold boxes,' as Horace Walpole said.

In the end a coalition was made between Newcastle and Pitt. Newcastle became First Lord of the Treasury, disposed of patronage, and managed the House of Commons; Pitt became Secretary of State and directed the war. It was a division of power that fully satisfied both parties. In effect, during the following four years, Pitt was dictator of the British Commonwealth. He dominated and dictated to the cabinet. The heads of the chief executive departments had to swallow their pride and carry out his imperious orders. When Anson, for example, told Pitt that as First Lord of the Admiralty he could not produce a certain fleet in a certain time, 'in that case,' said Pitt, 'you will be impeached in the House of Commons': the fleet was ready in four days.

The House of Commons was completely under his spell, especially now that all the traditional methods of 'management' were arrayed on his side. During these four years no one dared to resist his will: at first the dread of national disaster, and later the intoxication of the incredible successes brought about by his resolution and his courage, ensured his ascendency. There were many who resented his dictatorship. Their time was to come. But, in the meanwhile, he was permitted to save his country.

It was not mere magnetism and courage which enabled Pitt to carry through the herculean labours of the next four years, though without his magnetic power of inspiration and without his sublime courage they would have been impossible. The more the work of these four years is studied the more clear it becomes that Pitt added to these gifts a very remarkable power of organising the conduct of business, an assiduous devotion to detail, an astonishing mastery of all the complexities of foreign negotiations and of military and naval administration, a remarkable readiness to learn from all who had anything useful to tell him—for such men he could always find time in his busy day. Above all, he had a genius for the choice of men, and was ready to disregard the ordinary rules of promotion in picking out the men to do his work. He was not only a great leader and inspirer of men, he was a superlatively great administrator with an amazing power of getting work done.

Nor even Pitt, however, could in a moment conjure victory out of disaster. He had planned the campaigns of 1757; but he had had to use the resources available, and the men then in command; and the carrying out of his plans had been interrupted by the unfortunate interregnum at a critical time. The year 1757 showed, on the surface, no improvement over its predecessor; on the contrary, it seemed to have brought a culmination of woes.

In America Loudoun, supported by a large fleet, went to Halifax with his main forces, now greatly increased, intending to attack Louisbourg; but, finding the French too strong, returned ignominiously to New York when the campaigning season was over. In his absence Montcalm had thrown himself with all his strength upon the small British forces that had been left to guard the line of the Hudson river.[1] He compelled the surrender of Fort William Henry. The garrison were given a promise of safe retreat; but Montcalm's Indian allies got out of hand, and slaughtered many

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 56 (*a*).

of the retreating force. If Loudoun had not meanwhile returned from Halifax with the troops Pitt had sent him, Montcalm might have advanced far down the Hudson. The situation in America was graver than ever when the campaign of 1757 closed.

But it was from the continent of Europe that the worst news came in this year. Austria had handed over to her ally France the ports of the Austrian Netherlands; and the continental coast of the Narrow Seas, for whose sake Britain had fought so many wars, was in enemy hands. Worse still, our only ally, Frederick of Prussia, rashly advancing into Bohemia, had suffered a terrible defeat at Kolin and been forced to retreat. While France had formed an army to attack him from the west, Russian hordes were advancing to attack him on the east, and the Swedes threatened him from the north. His destruction seemed inevitable.

Worst of all, the main French army had been directed against Hanover. Resisted only by a mixed force of Hanoverians and Hessians of less than half its numbers under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, the French had won a crushing victory at Hastenbeck, and all the lands west of the Elbe seemed to be lost. In September 1757 Cumberland signed the humiliating capitulation of Klosterzeven, whereby the army of observation in Hanover was disbanded. Hanover seemed to lie wholly at the mercy of France. That would complete the ruin of Frederick, by exposing his flank. The next campaign might be expected to annihilate him; and then France and her allies would be able to turn all their strength against Britain.

A final disappointment, the news of which followed hard on the heels of Klosterzeven, completed the disillusionments of this dark year. Pitt had planned a strong blow at Rochefort on the coast of France, and had found for it a fleet under his best admiral, Hawke, and an army. The attack was delivered at the end of September. The fleet did well, capturing the fort on the isle of Aix with thirty-six guns. But Mordaunt, the general in command of the army, one of the old cautious school, simply declined to attack Rochefort; and the expedition came home again ingloriously at the beginning of October. Mordaunt, Loudoun and their teacher Cumberland had given Pitt his fill of generals of the orthodox school. Henceforward he chose his own men, without regard to official precedence.

It is not wonderful that in the summer and autumn of

1757 men should have thought the outlook almost hopeless. Even Pitt was disheartened: it was, he said, 'a gloomy scene for this distressed, disgraced country,' for whose future he felt 'little less than despair'; and during the summer he even offered to surrender Gibraltar to Spain in return for help in recovering Minorca. The offer was refused. 'We are undone at home and abroad,' said the Earl of Chesterfield, a shrewd judge of public affairs. 'The French are masters to do what they please in America. We are no longer a nation. I never yet saw so dreadful a prospect.' That was the almost universal feeling. The sun of British greatness seemed to be setting after its brief splendour.

Such is the dark background which sets off the radiance of Pitt's achievements during the following years. For this was the darkest hour before the dawn. Already his work of preparation was beginning to bear fruit. The navy was blockading all the French ports, and forbidding the exit of French fleets; but that was silent work which no one noted. The pervading gloom only intensified the great minister's resolution. He was eagerly at work upon the plans for the next year; he had fixed upon the captains whom he could trust; he would abandon hope nowhere, not even in Germany. The capitulation of Klosterzeven, fortunately broken by the French, was promptly repudiated. A British contingent was prepared to stiffen the Hanoverian and Hessian troops; a skilful general, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, was borrowed from Frederick the Great to take command of the combined force.

And during the winter, to which men had looked forward with shivering fear, the first pieces of good news began to come in. Frederick the Great, instead of accepting his defeat at Kolin, had in November launched a swift and brilliant attack at the southern French army which was advancing against him, and in the battle of Rossbach had inflicted a blow so crushing that French prestige never recovered from it till the time of Napoleon. Then, turning east, he had suddenly burst down upon the Austrians who had occupied Silesia, and at Leuthen had defeated vastly superior numbers and driven them out of the province. He was still faced by terrible odds. But the news of these dazzling victories—the first really good news which had come since the war opened—aroused in England the most intense enthusiasm. Frederick became a national hero, almost as in Prussia. 'The Protestant Hero' they called

him : the name must have amused the brilliant, unscrupulous sceptic to whom it was applied.

Good news came in from the Indies also : first the news that Clive had regained Calcutta ; then the incredible tidings of the victory at Plassey, that placed all Bengal at the feet of the East India Company. These were victories in no sense prepared or organised at home. But they raised the drooping spirits of the nation and prepared it for the astonishing reversal of fortune that was to begin in the next year, and to go on swelling in magnitude as long as the war lasted. The dark days were over.

§ 3. *The Turn of the Tide* (1758).

It was in the campaign of 1758 that the genius of Pitt had its first chance of displaying its power. The campaign was to yield an intoxicating series of triumphs in every direction. They were the result of infinite forethought and care in preparation.

In the first place everything was done to stimulate the public zeal both at home and in America. The spirit of Pitt's appeals to the nation was expressed in the king's speech on the opening of Parliament—a speech written, of course, by Pitt. 'I have the firmest confidence that the spirit and bravery of this nation, so renowned in all time, and which have formerly surmounted so many difficulties, are not to be abated by some disappointments. . . In this critical juncture the eyes of all Europe are upon you.' To the American colonists similar appeals were made. They were called upon to provide 20,000 men ; the mother country undertaking to defray the whole cost of arms, equipment and rations, and to make a grant towards pay and clothing to those colonies which showed zeal. Under these conditions the objections of the colonists disappeared, and they raised nearly 23,000 men, more than twice as many as they had ever raised before.

The main campaign of the year was intended to be the campaign in America : here, as Pitt saw and Newcastle had never seen, lay the great field of conflict. But the American campaign was to be only part, though the greatest part, of a vast plan, all the parts of which closely related to one another.

In the first place, powerful blockading squadrons watched the French naval bases in the Channel and the Bay of Biscay, to prevent the French fleet from slipping out to do any

damage or to help Canada. The weary vigils of the blockading squadrons were the foundation of the whole fabric of success, though little was heard of them. And while their crews, afloat in all weathers, gained in seamanship and the sense of mastery, the French fleets, locked up in harbour, steadily deteriorated in quality. In the same way a squadron based on Gibraltar watched to prevent the French from slipping out of the Mediterranean: the only attempt to do so which was made by the Toulon fleet was promptly baffled.

In the second place Pitt found naval squadrons and land forces to make a series of attacks upon the French coast.[1] In May there was a descent in the neighbourhood of St. Malo. In June there were demonstrations against Havre and Honfleur. In August Cherbourg was captured and its forts and shipping destroyed. In September there was a second and unfortunate attack upon St. Malo. These expeditions were much criticised at the time, and have often been criticised since, as a waste of men and money. They led to no very direct results. But they kept France in a nervous state. They caused her government to withhold or to withdraw at least 30,000 men from the German campaign. Frederick the Great did not share the popular view of their futility, but begged that they should be continued.

In the third place, the German campaign was vigorously supported, and large subsidies were paid to help Prussia in her troubles. Ferdinand of Brunswick, at first with an army of German mercenaries in British pay, to whom 9000 British troops were added later in the summer, brilliantly manœuvred against two French armies each superior to his own, won a striking victory over one of them at Crefeld, and by the end of the campaign had cleared them out of Hanover. For the first time a Hanoverian campaign was followed with breathless interest in Britain.

It was fortunate for Frederick that Pitt had changed his views about German campaigns, for Frederick was hard put to it to hold his own against his ring of enemies in this year; the Russians were at last upon him, and though he won a costly victory over them at Zorndorf, he had to submit to defeat from the Austrians. Yet he still retained his hold over all his territories. He could not have done so had the Hanoverian army not protected his flank, and relieved him from anxiety from the French. Pitt was much taunted with his new attitude on Hanoverian

[1] See the map of the Narrow Seas, Atlas, Plate 45 (*a*).

campaigns. He had his retort ready. No one could suggest that he was giving all his attention to the European struggle, as his predecessors had done. But by using it to distract the efforts of France, he was helping the main campaign in America.

Not content with all these activities, Pitt found the naval and military forces for a brilliant little expedition to West Africa.[1] The French fort and trading station at Senegal were captured by April, and at the end of December the island of Goree fell to an attack by Keppel. All the French factories, and all the rich trade of the French company in gold, ivory, and above all slaves, fell into British hands.

But the main object of the year's fighting was to redress the situation in America. Here Pitt had planned no less than four converging campaigns; and on these he had expended his best thought and his most anxious and detailed preparations.[2] The main attack was to be against Louisbourg; a second big attack aimed at getting control of Lake Champlain, and advancing by that route to meet the conquerors of Louisbourg when they advanced up the St. Lawrence; a third and minor onslaught was to be directed along the river Mohawk against the forts on the Great Lakes; a fourth was to redeem Braddock's disaster and secure the Ohio Valley. He had chosen his men carefully for these enterprises. For the Louisbourg attack the naval command was given to one of the best of English admirals, Boscawen, the military command to a colonel brought back from Germany, Amherst, with a promising young soldier of thirty-two, James Wolfe, as second in command. For the Champlain command, and for that alone, he kept one of the old gang, Abercromby, but placed beside him the brilliant young soldier Howe; for the Lakes expedition he had picked out a very successful colonial, Bradstreet, who had done well on the southern frontier in the last campaign; for the Ohio enterprise his choice fell upon a staunch and patient old Scotsman, Forbes. All of them were provided with large and well equipped forces; all of them knew that they would receive all the support they could ask for, warm recognition if they succeeded, disgrace only if they failed through lack of energy.

All save one of the four expeditions met with complete success. Boscawen, Amherst and Wolfe captured the great

[1] See the map of West Africa, Atlas, Plate 64 (*c*).
[2] See the map, Atlas, Plates 54, 55, and 56 (*a*).

fortress of Louisbourg with 4000 prisoners and 220 guns, and destroyed a French squadron of thirteen sail which lay in the harbour; and with the fall of Louisbourg the path lay open up the St. Lawrence to Quebec. Bradstreet forced his way up the Mohawk to Lake Ontario, and not only regained Oswego, but took the important French Fort Frontenac, thus cutting communications between Canada and the Ohio, and opening the possibility of an attack down the river against Montreal and Quebec. Forbes, with one Highland regiment and a large body of colonials, cut a road through the forests with dogged patience, and reached Fort Duquesne—only to find that its garrison had fled, and that the Ohio Valley had passed for ever out of French hands. He dated the despatch announcing his success from 'Pittsburg'; 'I have used the freedom,' he wrote, 'of giving your name to Fort Duquesne, as I hope it was in some measure the being actuated by your spirit that now makes us masters of the place.' The staunch old man, who had overcome a thousand difficulties, not least his own illness, died soon afterwards at Philadelphia; but it is possible that before he died he was cheered by the fine sentences of praise and appreciation which Pitt promptly sent to him.

Only on Lake Champlain was the record of complete success marred. Young Howe, who commanded the admiration and affection of all who met him, was unhappily killed at the opening of the campaign; and Abercromby had the folly to throw his gallant men, unsupported by guns, against a strongly fortified position which Montcalm had taken up near Ticonderoga.[1] With fruitless valour the new Highland regiments whose fathers had been rebels, and their English and colonial comrades, threw themselves against impassable obstacles which might easily have been outflanked; and after futile slaughter Abercromby fell back again upon his base.

Yet even with this check, what a record of victories 1758 had produced! Senegal and Goree; Crefeld and the freeing of Hanover; the French fleets reduced to impotence; Louisbourg captured; the Ohio Valley cleared; the forts on the Great Lakes occupied. It was a draught of triumph more intoxicating than the British peoples had ever drunk in any year of their history, and all the more marvellous by contrast with the gloom of the last year. But 1758 provided only the foundation for the greater triumphs of 1759.

[1] R. L. Stevenson has a ballad on Ticonderoga.

§ 4. *The Annus Mirabilis of 1759 : Quebec and Quiberon.*

The Duke of Newcastle, indeed, was eager to treat for peace, and to barter Louisbourg against Minorca ; he could not believe that such successes could be more than a flash in the pan. But even if Pitt and the British peoples had been of Newcastle's mind, peace negotiations would have been of no avail. For a new minister had come into power in France, a man of courage and resource, the Duke of Choiseul, who, realising more clearly than any of his predecessors the magnitude of the issues that were at stake, refused with fine courage to despond, or to believe that the spirit and resources of his country were exhausted, and resolved to throw all his weight into the struggle against Britain. Pitt was to have, what hitherto he had lacked, a foeman worthy of his steel.

Choiseul's chief hope was that he might bring Spain into the fray, and so gain an equality, if not a preponderance, of naval force ; for he saw that in this world-wide conflict everything depended upon naval power. He urged Spain to realise that the only nations which now counted in the world were those that possessed colonies, foreign trade and naval strength. Even Russia, Austria and Prussia were negligible in comparison with the maritime powers ; and among the maritime powers Holland had already fallen into the background, and unless France and Spain joined forces Britain would soon be left without a serious rival in the world—Britain, which counted a population, even including her colonies, of less than half that of France alone. But Spain was not yet prepared for his wooing, though she was to listen to it, with disastrous results to herself, two years later.

Failing to gain Spanish aid, Choiseul pinned his hopes upon the chances of a bold attack upon the very heart of the British power. He projected an invasion of England in force ; and during the winter of 1758-9 he was preparing a great army of 50,000 veterans to be ferried across the Channel, while another force of 36,000 French, Russians and Swedes were to invade Scotland under the protection of a Swedish fleet. Proclamations were actually drafted for distribution in Scotland. But though the northern expedition against Scotland came to nothing, the hoped-for allies refusing to co-operate, the plan of an invasion was persisted in ; and, like Napoleon nearly fifty years later, Choiseul prepared a host of flat-bottomed boats for the transport of

the invading armies. It was a perfectly serious project, which aroused, like its successor, grave alarm in England.

Pitt was not the man to allow his plans of campaign to be dictated by anybody else. Far from permitting the alarm of invasion to reduce his efforts overseas, as it was intended to do, his oversea enterprises planned for 1759 were, as we shall see, on a still grander scale, and still bolder in their aims, than those of 1758. But he did not neglect Choiseul's threat. Instead of keeping back troops that were needed for America or Germany, he sent more than ever to those campaigns; and for home defence he trusted to the nation, and called out the militia, which had been reorganised by an Act of his own in 1756. In some counties the calling out of the militia produced riots. But on the whole it was responded to with splendid spirit; and the moral effect of thus calling on the people to fight for their country was wholly admirable. It welded the unity of the nation; it swept away party feeling; it weakened class distinctions. Tory squires who had long sulked in their manor-houses joined with Dissenters and tradespeople. 'Gentlemen now associate and act together,' as one lord-lieutenant reported, 'who were very shy lately, and scarcely knew one another.' Martial ardour spread through the nation. Towns raised new regiments at their own expense, or armed and drilled their citizens; private persons even undertook the whole cost of raising regiments. No such patriotic zeal had ever been known in Britain before, not even in the days of the Armada.

The services of the militia and the volunteers were never called upon; because the navy, besides meeting all the demands of Pitt's distant expeditions, was quite capable of baffling Choiseul's scheme. For like Philip II.'s project of 1588, and like Napoleon's later, the possibility of carrying out the invasion was dependent upon the chance of gaining command of the Channel, if only for a short time; and even with large British squadrons scattered far afield, that could only be done if the whole French fleet could be brought together. To prevent this was the business of the navy, and very thoroughly it did its task.

Two great naval battles—the only considerable naval actions of the war—were fought to achieve this end. It was essential to Choiseul's scheme, as to Napoleon's later, that the French fleet in Toulon should get out of the Mediterranean and join forces with the Channel squadrons.[1] In August

[1] See the map of the North Atlantic, Atlas, Plate 45 (*b*).

1759 the attempt was made. Boscawen's Gibraltar squadron caught them as they were slipping through the straits; pursued them north-westwards to the Portuguese coast between Lagos and Cape St. Vincent; and there destroyed all but two vessels which escaped, and five which had earlier taken refuge in Cadiz.

The action of Lagos destroyed Choiseul's grand scheme. But he still persisted in his project of an invasion. To convoy the transports, which were gathered in the ports north of the Loire, the main French fleet under Conflans came out from Brest in November,[1] taking advantage of a violent westerly gale which had forced Hawke and his blockading fleet to beat back to Torbay. Conflans sailed southwards, towards Lorient and Quiberon Bay. But Hawke[2] was hard upon his tracks. Conflans thought he would be safe in Quiberon Bay, the entrance of which is guarded by dangerous reefs, especially as a violent gale was blowing on a very dangerous lee shore. He had calculated without Hawke; who, defying gale and reefs and lee shore, ordered his captains to set their course by the French, forced his way in, and simply annihilated the French fleet.

Quiberon Bay was one of the most brilliant and daring actions in the history of the British navy. And it was decisive. It was the Trafalgar of this war. The French navy no longer counted. The invasion of England was henceforth hopeless. No more reinforcements or supplies could be sent to America or India. The British command of the seas was made impregnably secure.

Henceforth French action by sea was limited to commerce destruction. In that sphere the French had already shown great daring, and inflicted heavy damage, which grew worse as the war proceeded. Between 1756 and 1760 more than 2500 British ships were captured, and in 1761 no less than 812. But the very numbers of the British ships captured by French privateers during the next three years was itself (paradoxical as this may appear) a proof of British sea-supremacy. For scarcely any French ships ventured out for trading purposes; the bulk of the French marine, naval and mercantile, could find no employment save in privateering. On the other hand British ships were innumerable and omnipresent; new ships were built faster than the old ones were captured; during these years the number of British

[1] See the map of the Narrow Seas, Atlas, Plate 45 (*a*).

[2] There is a life of Hawke by Montagu Burrows. A favourite toast in these years was 'The eye of a Hawke and the heart of a Wolfe.'

merchant-ships rose to about 8000, and they enjoyed an extraordinary supremacy in the world's carrying trade.

But privateering was not by any means limited to the French side. It was practised with equal vigour by British and American sailors. Every port had its privateering craft, armed and licensed to prey upon enemy shipping. The great drawback of the practice of licensing private vessels (which every nation followed until 1856) was that these vessels could not be kept under control, and readily drifted into mere piracy. The difficulty became all the greater when the French flag almost disappeared from the seas, and the carriage of goods for France was undertaken by neutral vessels. Could these goods be intercepted? Or must the free supply even of warlike stores to France be permitted? On that question controversy raged, and the neutrals became more and more hostile to British sea-power; all the more because of the way in which many of the privateers behaved. The Americans in particular ravaged the Dutch and Spanish shipping in the West Indies, while at the same time they made huge profits by selling naval stores to the French. Pitt tried to check the excesses of the privateers by an Act which he introduced and carried against considerable opposition in 1759. 'England the mistress of the ocean should not act despotically there,' he told the House of Commons. His bill did not remove all the grievances of the neutrals, which were to be put forward more vigorously in the next war. But at least he did his best to restrain the abuses of the system.

Naval supremacy had its dangers and its difficulties, and it took time to learn how to use it with restraint and justice. But in the meanwhile it ensured victory in the main campaigns; the triumphs of the navy were the essential foundations of all Pitt's victories in America, and of all the amazing triumphs in India. Beyond question Lagos and Quiberon Bay denied all chance of success for the desperate endeavour to restore the French position in India which the gallant Lally was carrying on during these years, as we shall see in the next chapter. And even in this year of threatened invasion, naval supremacy enabled Pitt to strike a vigorous blow against the prosperous French islands in the West Indies, where the rich island of Guadeloupe was captured.

In one field alone the navy could give no direct help—on the continent of Europe. Here Frederick of Prussia, fighting against impossible odds, had to submit to heavy defeats with appalling losses from the Russians and the

Austrians. Half his army was lost; his enemies, including the Swedes, were encamped upon his territory; he contemplated suicide; his only hope lay in help from Britain.

Yet the very gloom that enshrouded Frederick heightened the value of the brilliant successes which this year brought in the Hanoverian campaign. Faced by two French armies, outnumbering him by two to one, Ferdinand of Brunswick not only held his own, but won at Minden one of the most dazzling of victories, which almost enabled him to clear the French out of Western Germany. The brunt of the fighting fell upon six British regiments which still have the name of Minden on their colours. The French army was as deeply humiliated as the French navy.

But, as in 1758, the greatest campaign of 1759 was that of America. Its object was no less than the final destruction of the French power, and this it very nearly succeeded in achieving. As in 1758 a triple line of attack was planned.[1] One expedition, under Colonel Prideaux, was sent to complete the conquest of the lake region by the capture of Fort Niagara, between Lakes Erie and Ontario. It fully achieved its aim, and was ready to co-operate in an advance down the river towards Montreal. A second force, consisting of 11,000 men, half British and half colonial, was placed under Amherst, the conqueror of Louisbourg, and charged with the task of clearing the line of Lake Champlain and advancing by that route to Quebec. Its task was also achieved with some ease, for the main French forces had been withdrawn for the defence of Quebec. Amherst was a sound soldier, but somewhat deliberate in his movements. He did not advance rapidly enough to help in the attack on Quebec, which would have been greatly lightened had he approached it from the west while the main attack was being delivered from the east. His delay threw upon the third expedition of the year a very heavy, indeed it might seem an almost impossible, task.

This expedition, which aimed at the conquest of Quebec, was entrusted to a combined naval and military force, 22 men-of-war under Admiral Saunders, convoying 9000 picked troops, all British, under James Wolfe,[2] a young man of thirty-three, without influence, who owed his chance to Pitt's choice, and who was already known as the ablest, most thoughtful and most daring of British soldiers. The attempt

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 55.

[2] There is a good short life of Wolfe, by A. G. Bradley, in the English Men of Action Series.

seemed to be in the last degree venturesome. The navigation of the St. Lawrence was held to be almost impossible for a large fleet; yet Saunders accomplished it with complete success. The fortress of Quebec, which overlooked and dominated the narrowest part of the river, was held to be impregnable; it had been protected by the most elaborate fortifications, and was defended by about 15,000 French soldiers under a great captain, Montcalm, who commanded their entire loyalty. When Saunders and Wolfe arrived at the Isle of Orleans opposite Quebec, they saw before them [1] a high rocky bluff crowned by a fort whose guns seemed to command the river; westwards steep cliffs, two hundred feet high, seemed to make a landing impossible even if the guns of the fortress could be passed; eastwards a deep river, the St. Charles, coming down from steep high ground, protected the citadel, and beyond it, facing the British forces on the Isle of Orleans, a stretch of low land, backed by cliffs, was guarded by a continuous line of elaborate earthworks, behind which lay an army larger than Wolfe's. The nut seemed too hard to crack, unless Amherst, coming down the river from the west, should co-operate by an attack from that side. And of Amherst there was no word.

The months of July and August passed without anything achieved. Guns mounted on Point Levis, opposite the city, battered down its houses and mastered its artillery; but that did little good, except that it allowed Saunders to send four ships above the city. A joint naval and military attack on the main French position east of the town was beaten off with serious loss. September came; soon the river would begin to freeze. Wolfe wrote home to Pitt a desponding letter saying that his only hope was the desperate one of an attack above the town, for which, after leaving garrisons below, he could spare only 5000 men.

Immediately after writing this letter Wolfe embarked upon his forlorn hope. On a dark starlit night, the 12th of September, his little force set out to land at a steep and narrow path leading up the precipice to the Plains of Abraham above. French sentries saw them, but took them for an expected flotilla of boats bringing provisions for the garrison: Wolfe had counted on that. Twenty-four volunteers scrambled up the path in the starlight and overpowered the sentries above, while the clustered boat-loads below lay and waited, scarcely daring to whisper. Then the little army clambered up, dragging with them two guns,

[1] See the plan of Quebec, Atlas, Plate 55 (*a*).

and as morning dawned fell into line on the Plains of Abraham, looking across to Quebec. Montcalm, taken by surprise, brought up his men with what haste he could, and ordered a charge which should sweep the invaders over the cliff. The British troops lay still till the enemy were within forty paces. Then three withering volleys, followed by a charge, turned the French advance into a disorderly rout. Seldom has a victory so great been so quickly won. Wolfe, leading the charge, was struck by three bullets ; but he did not die, this happy warrior, till he knew that he had won one of the most momentous battles in his country's history. His gallant opponent was struck down almost at the same moment. Montcalm's successor withdrew most of his forces, and on 18th September, five days after the battle, Quebec capitulated.

This was the crowning victory of the *annus mirabilis* which had witnessed the most astonishing series of triumphs that ever was announced to an exulting nation. On June 13 London had learnt of the conquest of Guadeloupe ; on August 5 of the capture of the neighbouring island of Marie Galante ; on August 6 came the intoxicating news of the victory of Minden ; before the end of August word came of the defeat of the French fleet at Lagos ; during September tidings arrived of the capture of Fort Niagara and the occupation of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, names of dread for four years past ; October heard of the glory of Quebec ; November of the culminating victory of Quiberon Bay. 'It is necessary,' wrote the quidnunc, Horace Walpole, 'to ask every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one.' And this was only two years from the time when Chesterfield was moaning that 'we are no longer a nation.' The contrast is the measure of the genius of Pitt.

§ 5. *Negotiations for Peace : the Fall of Pitt.*

In comparison with the glories of 1759, the campaigns of 1760 and 1761 seemed to be something of an anti-climax. In 1760 it was made clear that the fall of Quebec did not mean the conquest of Canada. Wolfe's small army, after a hard winter, was attacked by the revived French forces, which greatly outnumbered it, was beaten almost on the scene of its victory, and was for a time besieged in Quebec. But the siege was raised by a fleet coming up the river and a land force advancing by Lake Champlain ; the French army fell back upon Montreal, where in September it was

forced to surrender, yielding the whole of Canada to the British Crown; and the long war for North America was over. The same year, as we shall see, yielded a decisive triumph to British arms in India in the defeat of the French at Wandewash.

Meanwhile on the Continent the outlook was gloomy. Ferdinand of Brunswick, though the British forces under his command were now larger than they had ever been, could achieve no very definite success. The British public, accustomed to victories, were losing patience with the German war, which only victory had made popular, and which was the most costly of all Pitt's enterprises. Frederick of Prussia was all but exhausted. He was only able to make head at all by drawing troops from Ferdinand. In 1760 the Russians for a time even occupied Berlin; and though his indomitable spirit enabled him to drive the Austrians once more out of Silesia at the battle of Liegnitz, to clear Berlin of the Russians, and to win the terribly costly victory of Torgau over the Austrians in Saxony, he was worn out. Among his opponents Austria and France were in a not much better condition.

The campaigns of 1761 were equally uneventful and indecisive. On the continent they were almost featureless, though Ferdinand of Brunswick won two successes. But Frederick was manifestly almost at the end of his tether. On the seas the only important event was the capture of the island of Belleisle, off the coast of France; a position which, occupied by British forces, would have formed a perpetual menace to France. Pitt was planning expeditions against the remaining French possessions in the West Indies, but he had not yet launched them.

The reason for this comparative lassitude was that peace negotiations (for which everybody, even Britain, was longing) had begun. Pitt was altogether ready to make peace, but only on two conditions—the first that Britain should receive a recompense commensurate with the sacrifices she had made and the victories she had won; and the second that Frederick of Prussia should not be left in the lurch. He had willingly entered into negotiations in 1759, but had dropped them when France had made it clear that what she wanted was a separate peace, leaving out Frederick. In 1760 he renewed them with equal willingness. But now the conditions had changed. George II. had died; and his successor George III. was imbued with the desire to overthrow the Whig oligarchy and to restore the Crown to the

position designed for it in the Revolution settlement. In that aim Pitt, who had no love for the oligarchy, would have been his natural ally, as indeed George III. and his confidant Lord Bute did not fail to recognise. But in the king's view the first step towards a restoration of the royal authority must be a cessation of war, and the termination of the powerful ministry which had conducted it. Nor was the king alone desirous of peace. Some of the leading Whigs, like the Duke of Bedford, were frightened by the very magnitude of the British success, and feared a general coalition against British supremacy on the seas. Others, like Pitt's own brother-in-law, George Grenville, were terrified by the spectre of the mounting national debt. And there were many who would not be sorry to shake off the dominion of the terrible dictator, now that the peril was over. The growing unpopularity of the war in Germany encouraged all these feelings. And as a result of these causes, Pitt found during 1760 and 1761 that his mastery in the cabinet was gradually weakening.

In the course of the peace discussions in 1761, though the terms proposed by France were not unreasonable, Pitt was struck by a certain stiffening in the French tone, and by signs of a *rapprochement* between France and Spain. A new king, Charles III., had ascended the Spanish throne in 1759. He was decidedly French in his sympathies, unlike his predecessor, who had remained neutral throughout the war; and Choiseul had found him ready to listen to the suggestions of common action against Britain which he had already made in vain in 1758. In August 1761, while the peace negotiations were going on, a secret treaty between France and Spain, the Third Family Compact, was concluded. It was a treaty of close and perpetual alliance; and one of its clauses bound Spain to declare war on Britain unless peace was signed before May 1762. This was not known in England; but when the French negotiator in London not only insisted that Britain must give no further help to Prussia, but also produced various demands on behalf of Spain, and explained that these must be satisfied before peace could be signed, Pitt concluded that the two Bourbon powers were acting in conjunction. He broke off the negotiations, and recommended the cabinet at once to declare war upon Spain.

But the peace party in the cabinet was now in the majority. Pitt found only one supporter. His dictatorship was at an end. Declaring that he would not be responsible for meas-

ures he did not manage, he resigned his office (October 1761). The most glorious ministry in British history was over. It had found the Commonwealth divided, disheartened and apparently on the verge of ruin. After four brief years, it left it united, triumphant, and recognised as the greatest power in the world.

§ 6. *The Aftermath : the Downfall of Spain.*

It may be that, in recommending war against Spain, Pitt looked forward to renewing and redoubling the triumphs he had already won, and to making Britain the inheritor of the Spanish colonial empire, as he had already made her the inheritor of the French. That was the view of many of his critics, who pictured him as rejoicing in war and insatiable with conquest. But there is not a word to justify such a view in all his correspondence, which shows him genuinely eager for peace, provided only that the terms were reasonably good and that honourable obligations to Frederick were fulfilled. He was convinced that, with Spanish aid, France intended to try a last gambler's stroke ; the old nightmare of a Franco-Spanish alliance, which had haunted Whig statesmen ever since the time of Louis XIV., was reviving, and he thought that the quickest way to peace was to strike it down swiftly, as he knew he could do. Events were soon to prove that he was right. As soon as the annual treasure-fleet reached Spain in safety, her behaviour made war inevitable ; it was declared in January 1762, three months after Pitt's resignation.

Pitt had already made all his plans for the anticipated renewal of the war, and the campaign of 1762, against both France and Spain, was carried out in accordance with these plans. It was one of the most dazzling of the series, for the instruments of war which Pitt had sharpened were still at their finest. An expedition under Rodney which Pitt had already sent out against the French West Indies achieved the rapid capture of Martinique, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, and all the Lesser Antilles were in British hands. A fleet and an army of 10,000 men attacked Havana, the capital of Cuba, and captured it in a few weeks, together with twelve Spanish ships of the line and vast treasures. This was a blow against the very heart of the Spanish empire. When Spain endeavoured to force Britain's old ally, Portugal, into the confederacy and invaded the country, a British fleet and an army of 8000 men were despatched to

Lisbon, and the Spaniards were ignominiously driven back over the frontier. Finally an expedition despatched from India attacked and captured Manila, and compelled the surrender of the whole group of Philippine Islands and the payment of a heavy ransom. Under these crushing blows the Spanish empire seemed to be breaking up; and, indeed, it was clearly in the power of the British Commonwealth, had it chosen to do so, to bring down in ruin the oldest of the European colonial empires. The campaign of 1762 was even more dramatic than its predecessors in the suddenness of the ruin which it inflicted, and in the demonstration which it gave of the deadliness of the weapons which Pitt had sharpened.

§ 7. *The Peace of Paris.*

But these events made France and Spain realise that nothing was to be gained by a prolongation of the war; and as the British government, now headed by Lord Bute, was eager for peace, terms were agreed to before the end of 1762, and confirmed at the beginning of 1763.

The treaty of Paris was the triumphant culmination of the history of the first British empire. No diplomatic instrument in history had ever disposed of regions so vast and so full of potentiality as those with which it dealt; nor had any dominion made by man shown so wide a diversity of character and opportunity as that which this treaty confirmed to the British peoples. Canada and all the territories east of the Mississippi save New Orleans became British, including the territory of Florida, which was ceded by Spain as the price of the restoration of Havana. On the North American continent France retained nothing but the unexplored territory west of the Mississippi, which she handed over to Spain, and the two tiny islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon in the St. Lawrence estuary, which she kept as a foothold for her fishermen, for whom fishing rights off Newfoundland were preserved. The destiny of the North American continent lay in British hands: self-government, not autocracy, was to shape the future development of that vast land. In the West Indies France regained her richest islands, Martinique and Guadeloupe; but Grenada, St. Vincent, Tobago and Dominica, hitherto neutral, became British. In the Mediterranean Minorca was restored, to become once more a British naval base and a security for British supremacy in that sea. In distant India France regained her two trading stations, but only for purposes of trade, not as

military establishments; and in effect she recognised the political supremacy of Britain both in Bengal and in South-Eastern India. Thus in the East as in the West and on the seas, the absolute supremacy of Britain was established.

The most striking omission of the treaty was that of any definite settlement of European problems. Frederick of Prussia was, in fact, deserted by Pitt's successors; and but for the lucky accident which brought to the Russian throne his devoted admirer Peter III. (1762) in place of his enemy Elizabeth, the desertion would have involved his ruin. As it was, he ended the war with no addition to his exhausted and enfeebled dominions, though with enormously heightened prestige; and because he believed himself to have been treated with a treachery which was only pardonable in himself, he was henceforth distrustful and hostile to Britain.

The failure to observe faith with Frederick is the main criticism which can be fairly made against the treaty of 1763. But it was bitterly criticised at the time, and has often been criticised since, on the ground that it gave to Britain less than she had a right to claim. It may be admitted that she could have insisted upon greater acquisitions had she chosen to do so. Had she willed it, no power could have prevented her from taking all the French West Indies and practically as much as she liked of the Spanish dominions; she could have kept the French West African possessions; she could have seized Louisiana; she could have excluded France from the trade with India and from the Newfoundland fisheries; she could have annexed the Philippines. All these things her statesmen voluntarily gave up; partly, no doubt, because they were eager to conclude peace, but partly also because they dreaded the reaction that would follow such a use of overwhelming power. And for that reason the treaty of Paris may fairly be described as a moderate treaty.

It was a wise moderation. Britain had won an unchallengeable supremacy on the seas; it behoved her not to use it tyrannically, and, despite the complaints which have come from neutrals as to the way in which this power has been used in war-time, it cannot fairly be said that it has ever been tyrannically employed. Britain had become the first of trading nations. Had she tried to turn her leadership into a monopoly in those tropical lands which had so long attracted the traders of the world, as Spain and Portugal had earlier done, she would have courted a doom like theirs, and she would also have stultified her own professions of

liberalism. She had made great material acquisitions—as great perhaps as she could profitably attempt to administer. But what is more important, she had assumed responsibilities of a magnitude and complexity such as no people in the world's history had yet undertaken. She had ensured the establishment of self-government throughout the continent of North America, but in doing so had necessarily raised in an acute form the problem of justly determining the relations between these self-governing communities and the mother country under whose ægis they had been planted. She had undertaken in India a task whose magnitude and complexity no human being could yet perceive. In one aspect the treaty of Paris is the culmination of a century and a half of colonising activities and of international rivalries. But after it there was immediately to open a new era of great problems and great opportunities, in the treatment of which human history had no guidance to give; since human history presented no parallel to the amazing structure of the British Commonwealth of free peoples, as the genius of Pitt had left it.

[Williams' *Life of Pitt*; Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power in History*; Corbett's *England in the Seven Years' War*; Fortescue's *History of the British Army*; Bradley's *Conquest of Canada*; Kemball's *Pitt's Despatches to Colonial Governors*; Marriott and Robertson's *Rise of Prussia*; Atkinson's *History of Germany in the Eighteenth Century*; Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* (especially the magnificent battle-pieces).]

CHAPTER VIII

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA

§ 1. *The Main Factors of Indian Politics.*

During the twenty years' struggle which led to the establishment of British supremacy on the seas and in the continent of North America, a still more remarkable transformation was taking place in the East: the foundations of British political power in India were being unconsciously laid. In many ways the course of events in India was deeply affected by the struggle in the West. In particular, as we shall see, British naval supremacy, as soon as it began to be skilfully wielded, exercised a decisive influence upon Indian affairs, by making it impossible for the French to send adequate reinforcements to their representatives in India. Nevertheless the struggle in India can best be treated as a separate story, all the more because its main features were due to great changes which were taking place in India itself.

During the first century of British and French trade relations with India the traders had had to deal with strong and consolidated Indian powers whose existence made the creation of territorial dominion by the European traders unthinkable.[1] The whole of Northern India, together with Afghanistan, had formed the powerful Mohammedan empire of the Moguls, with its capitals at Agra and Delhi, while in the south three substantial minor Mohammedan States divided the greater part of the peninsula between them: only in the south-east were there numerous independent Hindu principalities, known as the Polygars.

Thus almost the whole of India was under the rule of Mohammedan princes, though the Mohammedans formed a small minority of the population; and this had been the case ever since the first Mohammedan conquests in the eleventh century. Since that date the history of India had mainly been the history of a succession of invasions from the north-west through the Afghan passes, of a succession of empires maintained by mere military force over the subject popula-

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 59 (*a*).

tions, and of an endless series of wars between these conquerors. For nearly seven centuries India had known no government save the military rule of foreign conquerors, separated from the mass of their subjects by profound barriers of religion.

That is a surprising fact, which has to be explained. It was mainly due to the disunited condition of the Indian peoples. They belonged to many different races, in many stages of civilisation, from the primitive and backward tribes of jungle and hill-tracts to the highly cultivated Brahmins and the proud and warlike Rajputs. They spoke a multitude of languages, more numerous than those of Europe, and differing more widely from one another. And these differences were intensified and complicated by the remarkable system of caste, which was not only far more deeply rooted than the distinctions of class in any other land in the world, but was maintained and enforced by all the sanctions of the Hindu religion. This is not the place for any discussion of the Indian caste system. But it formed, and still forms, the fundamental and dominating fact of Indian life. The castes were innumerable. In part they represented racial distinctions, in part they corresponded with trades and occupations. Each caste had and has its own peculiar usages, its own religious observances, its own rules as to food and clothing, its own caste organisation, its special occupations. Every Hindu was and is born into a caste, from which he can never escape save by ceasing to be an Hindu; and by the rules of the caste the whole of his life is in the main determined. Any intermingling of castes by intermarriage, or even by intimate social intercourse, was and is prohibited: a man who broke caste rules in these matters would become outcaste, excluded from all human relationship not only with his caste-fellows, but with the members of other castes.

This remarkable system had one great virtue: it kept the machinery of society at work, whatever wars and revolutions might sweep over the country. Invaders might come and go, empires rise and fall, but the castes continued to carry on their hereditary functions in accordance with their inherited traditions, with which no conqueror ever found it possible to meddle. That is the explanation of the extraordinary fixity of Indian life. The system also made it easy to govern the country through the great priestly caste of the Brahmins, who exercised a religious ascendency which all the lower castes accepted and recognised, and whose

inherited aptitude for learning and skill in intrigue made them indispensable for administrative work. All the successive conquerors used the Brahmins as the agents of their authority. On the other hand the system was necessarily destructive of individual initiative, and of readiness to act otherwise than as caste usage dictated: it made the co-operation of members of different castes extremely difficult; and it therefore made India a very easy country to rule. The caste system gave to India a very stable social order, and a sort of social unity; but it was a unity rooted in disunity. In conjunction with the chaos of languages and races which had enabled it to grow up, the caste system prevented the rise of any sentiment of national patriotism such as would have made the rule of foreign conquerors impossible. The castes had been trained not to look beyond the traditional demands of caste rules: so long as these rules were not interfered with, they were indifferent to the transference of power, over their heads, from one conqueror to another.

The Mohammedan conquests had introduced another element into the chaos of Indian racial and caste distinctions —the bitter conflict of religious beliefs. Between Hinduism and Mohammedanism there were fundamental differences, as fundamental as those between any two religions in the world. The Mohammedan believes in one God; Hinduism includes in its pantheon thousands of divinities, and, though many Brahmin philosophers hold an exalted and rarefied monotheism, that does not affect the beliefs of the mass of ordinary Hindus. The Mohammedan regards all images not merely of gods but of men or animals as irreligious: Hindu worship largely turns on the use of innumerable images and symbols. The Mohammedan holds that all faithful believers are equal in the sight of God, and largely carries this belief into his ordinary practice; the most essential thing in Hinduism is the caste system, and the belief that every man is born into certain obligations, and a certain status, from which he can never escape. Between two religions so opposite nothing but antipathy could exist. The conflict was restrained, as a rule, by the wise moderation of Mohammedan rulers, but it formed a powerful obstacle to the rise of any sense of unity among the Indian peoples.

Thus the Mohammedans were a ruling class, entrenched in power: everywhere save in the Punjab (which was nearest to their original homes) and in Bengal (where large numbers of low-caste Hindus had been converted to Mohammedanism)

they were in a small minority. They formed a sort of garrison for the Mohammedan ascendency, and were deeply conscious of their own superiority. They had little of the intellectual subtlety which centuries of training had developed among the Brahmins; they drew their strength partly from the fact that they were constantly reinforced by vigorous new invaders from Central Asia, and partly from the fact that they were not divided into mutually exclusive castes, but were unified by that common zeal which Islam has always known how to create.

None of the empires and kingdoms which had successively risen and fallen in India had ever been more than mere dominions, or had ever attempted to establish a stable system of equal justice and impartial laws for its subjects. Apart from the misery which their wars inflicted, their rise and fall had made very little difference to the mass of the people. Hindus lived under Hindu law, Mohammedans under Mohammedan law; the notion of one equal law for all did not exist; and those who administered the law habitually used their power in an arbitrary way, and expected to make profit out of their authority.

The Mogul Empire had been the best of the long series of Indian empires. It had at least organised a systematic method of collecting the revenues, taking about one-third of the gross produce of all lands; the earlier Moguls had followed a wise policy of toleration towards the Hindus; and they had tried to secure more efficient administration of their huge dominions by dividing them into large *subas* or satrapies, each under the absolute control of a Nawab (deputy), with a Diwan for financial administration. The courts of the Great Moguls were very splendid; their armies were innumerable; their power seemed irresistible. But of course all their wealth was drawn from the people; and travellers from Europe who visited India during the period of the Moguls' greatest splendour speak in as strong terms of the misery and poverty of the mass of the people as they do of the opulent magnificence of the court. So long as peace was maintained, and the due amount of revenue was regularly paid, the Moguls were content to leave their subjects in the provinces at the mercy of the great officers who ruled them. Even at the height of the Mogul power order was ill-maintained. The Moguls never succeeded in creating a system which would secure the impartial administration of justice. Their authority depended altogether upon the vigour and the power of the sovereign. Every

Mogul emperor in turn had to fight his way to the succession, and at every such dispute the whole fabric seemed in danger of dissolution; for merely military dominations of this character always rest upon very precarious foundations. But for all that, the Mogul Empire succeeded for nearly two centuries in maintaining a certain degree of peace and order over the great expanse of Northern India; and so long as this lasted it could never occur to the European traders, whose factories were dotted round the coasts, to create a political dominion for themselves.

§ 2. *The Chaos of Eighteenth-Century India: the Mahrattas and the Afghans.*

In the first half of the eighteenth century the Mogul Empire fell (as sooner or later it was bound to do) into sudden and utter ruin; and it was the chaos which arose from this downfall that rendered possible the dramatic events with which we are immediately concerned. The Emperor Aurangzib,[1] in the second half of the seventeenth century, had entered upon a career of conquest in Southern India. He had overthrown the southern Mohammedan kingdoms, and organised the whole of this vast region as a single great *suba*, the *suba* of the Deccan. But he had been unable to make his authority real in his new conquests. In Southern India he had only produced anarchy, while the strain of his long wars, combined with his militant religious policy, had weakened his hold even in the north. Above all he had stirred into activity a hornets' nest among the Mahrattas of the west, whom his conquests had aroused into activity.

The Mahrattas were Hindus, mainly of low castes, who inhabited the jagged mountains which border the western Indian coast, and much of the uplands behind.[2] They spoke a distinctive language of their own, which gave them a certain unity; they were skilful horsemen and formidable guerilla fighters; and they had among them an extremely able race of Brahmins, the Chitpavan Brahmins, who have shown themselves to be possessed of even more than the average degree of Brahmin subtlety and administrative capacity. The Mahrattas had found a brilliant leader in their prince Sivaji, under whose rule they had suddenly

[1] There is a short life of Aurangzib, by S. Lane-Poole, in the Rulers of India series.

[2] See the map, Atlas, Plate 61 (*a*).

begun to play a great part in Indian politics; before his death in 1680 they were already a great power. Their light horsemen gravely embarrassed Aurangzib's armies; they raided immense areas of country, gathering plunder; and all attempts to crush them were in vain. They were the first great Hindu power that had arisen in India for many centuries, and that was part of their strength.

At the time of Aurangzib's death in 1707 the Mogul throne was already undermined. During the brief and troubled reigns of his successors it rapidly fell into complete disorganisation. The viceroys of some of the great provinces became practically independent princes, paying only a nominal allegiance to the Mogul at Delhi. The most important of these [1] were the Nawabs of Oudh and Bengal in the north, and the *subadar* of the Deccan in the south, where a very vigorous prince, the Nizam-ul-Mulk, was making Hyderabad the centre of a large hereditary dominion; subordinate to the ruler of Hyderabad was the Nawab of the Carnatic. These potentates gave a nominal recognition to the Mogul, whose real authority was now limited to the country round Delhi; but they obeyed him only when it suited their convenience to do so. And they were not able to enforce their authority even in their own provinces. Petty local rajas, in many parts of the country, became in effect independent princes. In the midst of the confusion adventurers found it easy to carve out dominions for themselves. Thus a band of Afghan raiders, known as the Rohillas, established themselves in the country known as Rohilkhand (near Delhi and north of Oudh): thus the warlike Hindu sect of the Sikhs were establishing their power in the Punjab, so far as Afghan raiders from the hills would allow them to do so: thus the daring adventurer Hyder Ali a little later made himself master of Mysore in the south, and extended his power on all sides.

But the most impressive feature of the period was the rise of the power of the Mahrattas. During the first half of the eighteenth century their raids and conquests were extending over every part of India. They had won more or less direct control over a vast area in Central India, where every raja paid them tribute. Their armies of raiding horsemen were seen in every part of India; they appeared almost simultaneously in 1740 before places so far apart as Calcutta and Madras. They claimed *chauth* (a fixed share of the public revenues paid as blackmail to secure the

[1] See the map, Atlas, Plate 61 (*a*).

country from devastation) even from some of the greatest princes: thus one-fourth of the revenues of the Deccan were paid over to them, for no service at all save that of abstaining from plunder. During all the period of the French and English conflict, which forms our main theme, the power of the Mahrattas was still growing, and in 1750 and for long afterwards it seemed as if they were to be the new masters of India in place of the Moguls.

But the Mahrattas showed no capacity for the development of a just and firm system of government. For them government meant simply the exaction of revenue, not the rendering of services to their subjects. They could not even create a unified government of their own dominions, such as the Moguls had been able to create. The supreme authority among the Mahrattas had now been annexed by Brahmin rulers, known as the Peshwas, who acted nominally as hereditary prime ministers for the descendants of Sivaji, kept in seclusion at Sattara, but really as the independent heads of the whole confederacy. During the period with which we are concerned—the first half of the eighteenth century— the power of the Peshwas was real, and from their capital at Poona (behind Bombay) they effectively controlled the general policy of the Mahrattas. But even in this period they were not without rivals, notably the family of Bhonsla, who ruled the greater part of the vast region now known as the Central Provinces, and whose perpetual jealousy and opposition greatly hampered the action of the Peshwa. Other chiefs also, heads of raiding bands, were rising into prominence, and tending to act independently, notably the families of Sindhia and Holkar. Even when it was most formidable, the Mahratta power was never well organised; it was destructive rather than constructive; and it did not at any time make any contribution towards the creation of a just and impartial system of government, primarily concerned about the welfare of its subjects.

The only serious competitors of the Mahrattas for the succession to the Mogul supremacy seemed to be the Afghans, who controlled the passes of the north-west, through which all the successive conquerors of India had come. Indeed the loss of control over these passes, which is necessary for the safeguarding of India, was one of the first marked signs of the downfall of the Moguls. When in 1739 Nadir Shah, master both of Persia and of Afghanistan, burst down into India and sacked Delhi, it seemed as if the inheritance of the Moguls was his for the taking—as if he would repeat

what the early Moguls of the sixteenth century had achieved. The sack of Delhi marks the final ruin of the Mogul Empire ; henceforth the emperors were mere puppets in the hands of one power or another. But Nadir Shah was content to plunder, and withdrew beyond the mountains, only claiming supremacy over the great province of the Punjab ; and here the Afghan supremacy was perpetually challenged by the Sikhs.

Nevertheless an Afghan incursion always seemed a possibility ; and any serious student of Indian politics in 1750 would have said that the future overlordship of India lay between the masters of Afghanistan on the one hand and the Mahrattas on the other. The Mahrattas themselves realised this ; and when Nadir Shah's empire broke up, and the Afghans, now apparently less formidable, began once more to raid the plains, the Mahrattas sent an army to occupy the Punjab and drive the invaders back to their hills. For a moment they were successful ; and this date (1759), which corresponds with the most dazzling victories of Britain in the west, may be said to mark the highest point of Mahratta power. They dominated Indian affairs. Their influence was felt all over India, from the Khyber Pass to Cape Comorin. The greatest of the Mogul provinces, Bengal and Hyderabad, paid *chauth* to them ; their horsemen were known and spread terror in every part of the country. But in 1759 the Afghan ruler, Ahmad Shah, came down with all the fighting men of the hills ; and after raiding and plundering for two years fought a pitched battle with a huge Mahratta host at Panipat (1761), north of Delhi. The Mahrattas were routed with tremendous slaughter. It is a striking coincidence that it was at Panipat that Baber, the founder of the Mogul Empire, who also came from Afghanistan, had won the decisive victory which established his power in India in the sixteenth century : it looked as if a new invading dynasty from over the hills was to repeat the old cycle, and found a new empire. But Ahmad Shah, like Nadir Shah, was content to raid and plunder. He returned to Afghanistan, keeping only Kashmir and the borders of the Punjab. The field was left clear for the Mahrattas. But it took them a long time to recover from Panipat ; and from this time onwards they were increasingly weakened by the quarrels of their various chieftains, who became more and more independent. They also, like the Afghans, were sacrificing their chance of supremacy ; and they had already shown

that if supremacy had fallen to them it would have brought no improvement in government for the mass of the Indian peoples.

In comparison with these gigantic conflicts, and with the immense spreading power of the Mahrattas, the little squabbles of French and English traders in a corner of the country, and the petty succession-disputes of Indian princes with which they were mixed up, seemed altogether unimportant. Yet those apparently insignificant conflicts were to bring into the field a new and involuntary candidate for the supremacy of all India, the British East India Company. In 1750, or even in 1761, no one could possibly have foretold or imagined, and least of all the East India Company itself, that this body of foreign traders was ultimately to succeed in establishing a dominion far more complete and extensive not merely than that of the Mahrattas now was, but even than that of the Moguls had ever been; a dominion which was to give to India political unity, which she had never known in all her history, peace such as not even Akbar had ever been able to give, and a uniform system of impartially administered law, a boon which no Indian dominion had ever conferred. It is important to remember that the first stages in the marvellous development which has led to these results were due to the chaos resulting from the collapse of the Mogul Empire; and that these first stages were passed through while the far more impressive growth of Mahratta power was taking place, and were overshadowed by the conflict of the Mahrattas and the Afghans. This conflict, indeed, contributed very directly to the growth of the British power. If it had not taken place, and if the Mahrattas had not suffered the crushing blow of Panipat in 1761, it is extremely unlikely that the power of the British traders would ever have been established. The background of conflict which we have tried to sketch may seem confused and bewildering, but it is essential to an understanding of the amazing story which we have now to tell.

§ 3. *French and British in the Carnatic: the Projects of Dupleix.*

On the edge of the whirling chaos into which India had now been reduced lay the factories or trading stations of the European powers, Portuguese, Dutch, French and British; we need only concern ourselves with the French and British stations. British trading activities were organised under

the control of three main trading centres, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, each independently managed by a President and Council, who reported separately to the Directors at home; each had a number of branch collecting stations in the wide area with which it dealt, but it was only at the three headquarters that there was any considerable number of British residents. The French had only two main factories, Pondicherry, some distance south of Madras, and Chandernagore, a little north of Calcutta; but the Chandernagore factory was definitely subordinated to that of Pondicherry. Both companies had found it necessary to fortify their headquarters, in view of the disordered state of the country, and to maintain small bodies of troops—Indian sepoys who were trained to fight in the European manner under European officers. It had often been proved in the past that small forces of Indian troops thus trained and led could hold their own against the vast disorderly mobs which Indian princes brought into the field; but the full extent of this superiority was yet to be shown. The French had one considerable advantage over their British rivals. In the island of Mauritius, near Madagascar, they had a calling station for their ships, and a possible naval base, such as the British lacked.

During the quarter of a century following the death of Louis XIV. the French had displayed an unwonted energy in the development of their trade, which, though it was far from rivalling that of the British company, was nevertheless growing so rapidly as to arouse their jealousy and alarm. They had opened new branch trading stations, notably one at Mahé on the west coast (1725). Benoit Dumas at Pondicherry (1735-1741), and François Dupleix his subordinate at Chandernagore (1730-1741), had put a new vigour into their work. Dumas, in particular, had established very friendly relations with the neighbouring princes, and had given a refuge at Pondicherry to the family of the Nawab of the Carnatic when he was slain by the Mahrattas: this connexion was to be of great importance in the future, though in 1740 this family lost its throne and was replaced by another ruler, Anwar-ud-din. Thus the French, in advance of the British, were starting the policy of building up their influence at the native courts.

From about 1740 onwards, while the War of the Austrian Succession was raging in Europe, and Britain and Spain were fighting on the seas, the traders of both nations in India were anticipating, some with alarm, others with hope, the outbreak of direct war between France and Britain. It was

long delayed; it did not actually begin till 1744. But the intervening years were filled with preparations. Some hoped that the rival traders in India would maintain neutrality as they had done during the wars of Louis XIV. The English company would readily have welcomed this means of carrying on their rich trade without interruption. The French company at home was of the same mind. But two bold and enterprising Frenchmen had recently succeeded to the control of the two chief French posts: Mahé de Labourdonnais, a famous and adventurous seaman, had become Governor of Mauritius in 1735; François Dupleix [1] had become Governor of Pondicherry in 1741; and both of these men, very different as they were in temper, had conceived the idea of using the opportunity to strike a blow against British trading superiority. Labourdonnais, in particular, had created a fleet at Mauritius, with which he hoped to do much damage. To guard against danger from this fleet, the British government sent out a squadron as soon as the war began. It arrived off Madras before Labourdonnais was ready, and it might have done grave mischief to the French. But the Nawab of the Carnatic, Anwar-ud-din, perhaps influenced by Dupleix, warned the British that he would not permit any fighting between the Europeans in his dominions. The fleet left the coast; and the British lost the moment of their superiority of strength.

In 1746 Labourdonnais appeared with his fleet off Pondicherry; and, though he and Dupleix quarrelled violently, they managed to direct a joint naval and military attack against Madras. The British, trusting to the protection of the Nawab, were unready and had no adequate garrison. Madras was easily captured. Dupleix had previously tried to win over the Nawab by offering to hand over the town to him. But once in possession he clung to his gain, and when Anwar-ud-din sent an army of 10,000 men to enforce his will, they were routed by a little force of 500 European-trained troops. This was a startling revelation of the capacity of such troops. It raised French prestige to the highest point. The British were left with only the little Fort St. David, a hundred miles further south, where they were hard pressed. When a large British naval squadron came out in 1748 and attacked Pondicherry without success, French prestige rose to a still greater height, and Dupleix's influence at the native courts rose in proportion. The

[1] There is a short life of Dupleix by Colonel Malleson in the Rulers of India Series.

British seemed to be crushed; their trade in this region might be expected to fall into the hands of the French.

It was a bitter disappointment to Dupleix when the war was ended by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, before he had completed the destruction of the British power, and a still more bitter disappointment when, under the terms of the treaty, he had to hand back Madras in exchange for distant Louisbourg. But the peace did not lead him to abandon his ambitious schemes. It only changed their character. He resolved to use the immense prestige that he had acquired, and the power of his European-trained troops, to intervene in the dynastic disputes of the South Indian princes. He would become the arbiter of South Indian politics, and thus establish French influence over the native governments. Having done that, he would be able, through his princely allies, to make the position of the British intolerable, to destroy their trade, perhaps to order them out of the country. If the British remained neutral, so much the worse for them; if they intervened, he was confident of being able to deal with them. This bold project he proceeded to carry out in spite of the fact that there was formal peace between Britain and France. Unwillingly and half-heartedly the British were forced to follow suit; and thus, in India as in America, the eight years of nominal peace (1748-1756) were years of intensified strife.

Dupleix's main plan was to dethrone the existing Nawab of the Carnatic, Anwar-ud-din, and to place on his throne a French protégé, Chanda Sahib, a member of the previous ruling family whom the French had earlier befriended. Chanda was a prisoner in the hands of the Mahrattas, and Dupleix helped to obtain his release in order to put him forward, knowing that a prince thus established would feel himself dependent upon the French, as well as bound to them by gratitude. But just at the moment when this plan was maturing the old Nizam of Hyderabad died, and rival candidates appeared for the succession to this great dominion, the greatest in Southern India, of which the Carnatic itself was a dependency. Dupleix took up the cause of the weaker of the two candidates. If he should be successful in his bold schemes, all Southern India would pass under his influence, and the British would be at his mercy.

It is needless to follow the details of the campaigns. By 1750 Dupleix was wholly successful. His candidates occupied the thrones both of Hyderabad and of the Carnatic. A large force of Sepoys with French officers, under the

command of a brilliant French soldier, the Marquis de Bussy, but paid for by the Nizam, was established at Hyderabad to protect the Nizam—and to keep him loyal. In the Carnatic Anwar-ud-din had been defeated and slain, and Chanda Sahib, the French protégé, occupied his throne. Anwar-ud-din's son, Mohammed Ali, was holding out with difficulty in the fortress of Trichinopoly; but apart from this there was no effective resistance. French prestige had reached a dizzy height; Dupleix seemed to be master of Southern India. Once Trichinopoly was captured and Mohammed Ali disposed of, his ascendency would be complete.

The British in Madras looked on at these proceedings with helpless alarm. They had dismissed most of their troops when peace was made; and, though they saw that they would be ruined if the French candidates were securely established, they were unable to give any material assistance to Mohammed Ali in Trichinopoly, who formed the only barrier to a complete French victory. In 1751 the situation at Trichinopoly seemed to be desperate: not only were the armies of Chanda Sahib and of the French besieging it, but large forces had been sent to their aid by the Nizam.

Fortunately for the British a new Governor, Thomas Saunders, had recently arrived at Madras. He understood the danger. He was a man of courage and tenacity; and he had the imagination to listen to the daring proposals of a young officer of twenty-six, and to provide him with the means for what seemed a reckless adventure. The young officer was Robert Clive,[1] who had come out to Madras seven years before as a writer in the company's service, but had exchanged the pen for the sword during the recent war, and had distinguished himself at the defence of Fort St. David. His proposal was that, instead of trying to send troops to Trichinopoly, where the enemy were overwhelmingly numerous, an attempt should be made to relieve it by a bold attack on Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, which was much nearer —only about fifty miles inland from Madras. On this desperate adventure he set forth with a force consisting of 8 officers (six of whom had never seen service) and 500 men, of whom 300 were Indian sepoys. The blow was so swift and sudden that the garrison of Arcot—far outnumbering its attackers—fled in panic. The immediate result was that

[1] Macaulay's brilliant essay, though it needs correction, is still the best short account of Clive; there are also short lives by Colonel Malleson in the Rulers of India Series, and by Sir Charles Wilson in the English Men of Action Series.

Chanda Sahib had to withdraw large forces from Trichinopoly to regain his capital. Clive and his gallant 500 stood a siege of fifty days by a force of 10,000 men, including some French; and though his provisions ran out, and the mud walls of the fort were in disrepair and far too extensive to be properly held, he maintained his position, beat off an attempt to storm the place, and, when the siege was raised, sallied forth and defeated the enemy in the open.

The capture and defence of Arcot marked the turn of the tide. In a purely military sense, indeed, the exploit counted for little, except that it relieved Trichinopoly for the moment. But it was an achievement so dazzling that it instantaneously raised British prestige, which had sunk almost to zero, and so made it easier for Mohammed Ali, whom the British were helping, to get aid from various Indian powers. More important still was the brilliant relief of Trichinopoly in June 1752 by a British force under Major Lawrence and Clive, which compelled a large French force to surrender and finally raised the siege. Chanda Sahib, who had surrendered to the Raja of Tanjore, was put to death by him; and Mohammed Ali, the British protégé, became Nawab of the Carnatic.

This was a grave blow to Dupleix's schemes. But he was not yet by any means defeated. Bussy's army still dominated Hyderabad, and kept that great power loyal to the French; and for two years more war swayed backwards and forwards. But the complete French ascendency of 1751 had vanished. Dupleix was in sore difficulties for money; and the French company at home was beginning to be anxious about this ceaseless fighting, which certainly was not good for trade. In 1754 the company recalled Dupleix, and sent out a sound business man to clear up the mess he had made. The two companies agreed not to intervene in local politics any more; Dupleix's grandiose visions of an easily acquired empire were gone. He went home to disgrace and poverty. Yet he had nearly created a great French dominion; and he had shown how easily, and by what methods, a European empire in India could be created.

Even after Dupleix's recall the position of the French in Southern India was stronger than that of the British. Mohammed Ali, it is true, occupied the throne of the Carnatic, and Mohammed Ali was a British protégé. But he was by no means yet under British control. On the other hand, Bussy was still at Hyderabad, and the far greater power of the Nizam was wholly under the influence of the French.

Bussy's army protected the Nizam against the Mahrattas, whom he feared; and this bound the Nizam still more firmly to the French. In 1755, the year after Dupleix's recall, the Nizam ceded to Bussy, for the support of his army, the best parts of the extensive region known as the Northern Sarkars, which extended along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. This was a territorial possession such as the British did not yet possess, and had not yet dreamed of. Thus, on the eve of the final great struggle between France and Britain, the French seemed to have all the best of the position, in India as in America.

§ 4. *Renewed Conflict; and the Establishment of British Influence in Bengal*

1755, the year in which the French acquired the Northern Sarkars, was also the year in which war began in the Ohio Valley. Everybody knew that formal war between Britain and France could not long be delayed. The French were preparing to send out an army to destroy the recently and insecurely established power of the British in the Carnatic. Owing to the lax naval administration of the British government before Pitt's accession to power, it was allowed to sail in 1756, under the command of an Irish exile, Count Lally, though it did not reach India till 1758.

Meanwhile Robert Clive had gone home to England, where he had a great reception; and he had urged upon the directors of the company the necessity of taking measures to counteract Bussy's influence at Hyderabad. For that purpose he was sent out with a small force and a squadron of ships under Admiral Watson. They arrived in India in 1756. Their first task was to root out a nest of Mahratta pirates who had been doing much damage to British shipping at Gheria on the west coast. Then they went on to Madras. But there was nothing for them to do there. The news of the formal declaration of war had not yet reached India, and nothing could be done against Bussy while peace lasted. But at Madras terrible news reached them from Bengal, where hitherto there had been no trouble. The prosperous British factory at Calcutta had been suddenly attacked and destroyed by the Nawab of Bengal: the situation must be restored, and Clive and Watson had arrived in the nick of time to restore it. The great question was, could they do what was necessary in Bengal before Lally and his army reached India and joined forces with Bussy? For the next three years the centre of interest

shifts to the hitherto placid and undisturbed province of Bengal in the north.

The shrewd old Nawab of Bengal, Aliverdi Khan, had died in April 1756. He had been watching the events in Southern India; and just before his death he is said to have advised his grandson and destined successor, Siraj-uddaula, to beware of the Europeans and especially of the British. Siraj-uddaula, a vicious, degenerate and tyrannical youth of nineteen, resolved to signalise his accession by a bold stroke. He demanded the surrender of a rich Hindu who had taken refuge in Calcutta. He ordered the British company to stop work upon the fortifications, which they were strengthening in view of the danger from France; and his only answer to a remonstrance was to march against Calcutta with an army of 30,000 men. Calcutta was ill protected, and only had a small garrison. The President and most of the leading residents ran away and took refuge on an island in the Hooghly; those who remained tried to defend the Fort, but were easily overpowered. After the surrender 146 captives were shut into a small guard-room known as the 'Black Hole,' where they had scarcely standing-room and no air: during an awful June night 123 of them were suffocated,[1] and the remainder were afterwards marched in chains to the Nawab's capital at Murshidabad. The thriving British trading settlement in Bengal was simply wiped out.

This was the news which brought Clive and Admiral Watson hurrying from Madras, with ten ships and a few troops. They reached the Ganges in December; on the 2nd of January 1757 they recaptured Calcutta. The Nawab marched to attack them; was beaten; and signed a treaty by which he promised restitution and compensation (February 1757).

But Siraj-uddaula had no intention of carrying out the treaty. He opened negotiations both with the French governor in Chandernagore and with Bussy in the Northern Sarkars, for a combined attack upon the British. The news of the outbreak of war in Europe had now reached India. It was known that Lally was on his way with a considerable French army. Clive felt that his presence might soon be needed at Madras. The danger was great. To diminish it, Clive struck suddenly at the French station of Chanderna-

[1] An attempt has been made to discredit the story of the Black Hole. But few events in history are better authenticated. The crime was committed without Siraj-uddaula's knowledge. He expressed no regret and punished nobody.

gore, captured it, and thus for a time removed the danger of a French attack in Bengal.

But the danger from the Nawab was still great, the treaty was still in abeyance, and the Nawab was very indignant at the attack upon Chandernagore. In the meantime his capricious and greedy tyranny had alienated the chief personages at his court. Already a conspiracy was on foot to dethrone him, and to put in his place his *bakhshi* or military treasurer, Mir Jafar, an old friend of his father's. The conspirators entered into negotiations with Clive, who eagerly seized the opportunity. At one moment their plans were endangered; for an intermediary, the Hindu Omichand, threatened to tell the secret to Siraj-uddaula unless he was promised a vast sum of more than a quarter of a million. Clive overcame the difficulty by a treacherous device which stains his memory: he drew up two treaty forms, a false one to satisfy Omichand, a real one to bind Mir Jafar. It was agreed that Mir Jafar should desert the Nawab; that he should be placed upon the throne; and that he should pay for British assistance immense sums, amounting to nearly £3,000,000, nominally as compensation for the damage inflicted by Siraj-uddaula. He was also to transfer to the British company the administration of the district round Calcutta, known as the 'twenty-four parganas.'

This secret treaty was signed in May 1757. Clive now became peremptory in his demands on the Nawab; and in June he set forth with an army of 3000, one-third of which consisted of British troops, to march against the Nawab's capital, Murshidabad. On the other side Siraj-uddaula gathered an army of 50,000 men, with whom were some fifty Frenchmen. The odds seemed dangerously great, unless Mir Jafar should fulfil his promise, and turn against his master. As the armies drew near one another, doubts of Mir Jafar's staunchness began to affect Clive; and for a moment he almost decided to avoid a fight. Defeat would mean utter ruin for the British in Bengal, and perhaps ultimately also in Southern India. All the members of his council save one, Eyre Coote, were for withdrawing. But after an hour's meditation Clive decided to take the risk. He ferried his troops across the river, and advanced against the enemy host, which was encamped in a grove of flowering pilash trees, at the spot for ever famous as Plassey. The fight which followed, and which established British power in Bengal, scarcely deserves to be called a battle: it was a panic. There was scarcely any serious fighting; the Bengali troops

simply ran away. The British lost only 19 men; the enemy not more than 500.

The rout of Plassey had portentous results. Siraj-uddaula fled, and was caught and killed by Mir Jafar's son. Mir Jafar became Nawab; his treasury was emptied to meet the demands of his allies under the treaty. But he knew, and all Bengal knew, that henceforth the East India Company was master: it could dethrone Mir Jafar as it had dethroned Siraj-uddaula. Mir Jafar was a puppet prince in quite a different sense from Mohammed Ali in the Carnatic.

The revolution in Bengal was not completed a moment too soon. In April 1758 a French army landed at Pondicherry under the command of Count Lally, an Irish exile who had seen service in the French armies in Europe, but knew nothing of Indian conditions. He was a brave man and a skilful soldier; but his tactless and overbearing temper made it difficult for his officers to work under him, and he alienated his Indian allies by his disregard for their usages and ideas. Bussy still dominated Hyderabad; and the addition of his resources and the power of the Nizam to Lally's army promised victory. Lally began well by capturing Fort St. David, which had held out against all Dupleix's attacks. But his campaign was gravely hampered by the appearance of a British naval squadron, which the small French fleet on the Indian coast did not venture to resist. To strengthen himself, Lally recalled Bussy and his army from Hyderabad, and proceeded (December 1758) to attack Madras. If Madras should fall, British power in the south-east of India would come to an end. After a siege of two months, Lally was making ready to storm the town, when once again the appearance of a British squadron at sea changed the position and compelled the raising of the siege.

Meanwhile the withdrawal of Bussy from Hyderabad had had disastrous results for the French. Only a small French force remained to defend the Northern Sarkars; and in the absence of the great captain, the Nizam's allegiance began to waver. The Sarkars could be attacked from Bengal; and in October 1758 Clive, in spite of the insecurity of his position in Bengal, despatched Colonel Forde with every available man to drive the French out of the Sarkars. The expedition was ably conducted. The French force was defeated; Masulipatam, the chief town of the Sarkars and the centre of a considerable French trade, was captured (April 1759). The Nizam, who had begun to

move in support of the French, changed his mind, abandoned the French alliance, and allowed the British to establish themselves in the Sarkars.

The loss of the Nizam's support was fatal to the French. It completed the downfall of their prestige in the eyes of those Indian potentates who might have helped them. Lally struggled on heroically during the years 1759 and 1760. But his troops were half-starved and inclined to be mutinous; and no aid could be expected from France, because her fleets had been reduced to impotence: Quiberon Bay had decided the issue in India, as in the West. In January 1760 Lally fought the decisive battle of Wandewash against an army about equal in number to his own, under Eyre Coote, one of Clive's men from Bengal. The battle was hard-fought; but it ended in a complete British victory, and the great Bussy himself was among the prisoners who fell into Coote's hands. All that remained after Wandewash was to secure the few remaining French posts. They fell one by one during 1760; and in January 1761 Pondicherry itself, the centre of the French power, was captured, and the dream of a French empire in India was at an end. Lally himself went as a prisoner to England; when he got back to France he was tried and beheaded.

Beyond a doubt the final defeat of the French in the south had been due in part to British naval supremacy and in part to the strength which the recent conquest of Bengal had placed in British hands, and the prestige which this conquest brought in the eyes of all India. Clive had not hesitated to send troops out of Bengal, and this bold act had determined the course of the conflict in the south. Yet his position in Bengal was by no means secure. He had to deal with several revolts against Mir Jafar: only the efficient troops of the Company could deal with them. He had to defend Bengal against an attack by the powerful neighbouring Nawab of Oudh, who brought with him the Mogul's eldest son, and claimed in his name the right of disposing of Bengal as an imperial province. The army of Oudh was defeated at Patna (1759), once more by the Company's troops. He had to deal with the hostility of the Dutch, who feared the results of British ascendency, started intrigues with Mir Jafar, and sent a fleet of seven ships from Batavia. Clive did not hesitate to attach the Dutch factory at Chinsura by land, while a squadron of three British ships attacked and defeated the Dutch ships. Wherever Clive and the company's troops

appeared they were victorious. By 1760 the position in Bengal seemed to be secure, and Clive thought it safe to leave for England.

§ 5. *The Nature of the British Power in India in* 1760.

At this point we may break off the narrative of the amazing series of events which laid the foundations of the British Empire in India. By 1760 the East India Company had acquired a complete domination over Bengal. It had not annexed this great province, or assumed any responsibility for its government, which continued to be carried on by an Indian Nawab as before. But this prince was, and knew that he was, utterly dependent upon the Company for his very existence. Revolts against his authority had been crushed—by the Company's armies. A dangerous attack upon his dominions from without had been repelled—by the Company's armies. The Nawab dared not pursue an independent policy, or resist the demands of the Company and its agents, who enjoyed absolute power without any responsibility for securing good government. Further south the Company had acquired an ill-defined control over part of the long stretch of coastal territory known as the Northern Sarkars. This was far less important than Bengal, and for the most part the petty rajas who ruled this rather backward region were left to themselves, without interference. The importance of the Sarkars was that they linked up Bengal with the Carnatic, and prevented the French (or other seafaring rivals of the British power) from having direct dealings with the Nizam. Finally, the throne of the Carnatic was held by a Nawab who knew that he owed his position to British aid. He was by no means so completely dependent as the Nawab of Bengal. Yet British influence was preponderant at his court, and British trade covered his territories. The Nizam also had become friendly to the British power; though there was no British force dominating Hyderabad, as Bussy had dominated it from 1748 to 1758.

Such were the beginnings of British territorial power in India. It consisted of influence based upon military prestige; it had not yet begun to assert direct sovereignty anywhere. Clive, indeed, with characteristic boldness of vision, was ready to take the next step, and in 1759 he wrote a remarkable letter to Pitt urging that the British government should assume direct responsibility for the administration of Bengal. But even Pitt, though he was sympathetic, was not ready

for so great a change. And the directors of the Company at home, far from desiring any increase of responsibility, were inclined to feel, after the first excitement of victory, that the power which had fallen into their hands was by no means an unmixed advantage. The cost of maintaining armies was very great, and swallowed up more than all the profits that came from Mir Jafar's concessions. The servants of the Company in India were being diverted from their main work, which was, after all, that of trade ; they were getting out of hand, and becoming too fond of dangerous adventures, which might be advantageous to themselves but brought no profit to the Company.

For the truth is that the East India Company had drifted into the possession of an empire without desiring it, or knowing what to do with it. They had been drawn into conflict with the French in the south in sheer self-defence against Dupleix's ambitious schemes, which would have led to the destruction of their trade. They had been drawn into the business of king-making in Bengal by Siraj-uddaula's attack on Calcutta, and by the proved impossibility of trusting him. They now found themselves saddled with costly and indefinite liabilities, and they wanted no increase of such responsibilities ; they wanted only to get back to peaceful trade, leaving India to settle her own political problems.

But there was no evading the new responsibilities. Unless the Company was prepared to evacuate Bengal and Madras, and to abandon the trade which they carried on there—and this was an unthinkable alternative—the strength and prestige which had been won must bring with them political power ; and power cannot be separated from responsibility without disastrous results. How dangerous such a separation may be was, indeed, already being demonstrated by the behaviour of the Company's servants in the years following Plassey ; it was to be still more terribly demonstrated in the next decade. The Company's servants had gone out to India not for philanthropic reasons, but to make money. They were paid ridiculously low salaries, and in compensation they had always been allowed to make what money they could by private enterprise. That was all very well when they were mere traders, kept in order by powerful native governments. But now they had suddenly become the masters of the country ; and at the same time they had no responsibility for its government, or for the welfare of its people. Nobody in Bengal dared deny them what they

asked; the only authorities who could control them were seven thousand miles away. What wonder that they took advantage of their position, accepted, or even demanded, huge gifts from the Nawab or his nobles, and took unfair advantages in carrying on their private trade? What wonder that they became rich with startling rapidity, and returned to England to buy country estates and borough seats in Parliament, and to astonish English society with their lavishness and luxury? They were enjoying power without responsibility, and only exceptional men can resist such temptations. Some of them did resist: notably Warren Hastings, a young writer in the Company's service whose capacity and vigour had attracted Clive's attention. But the majority succumbed to the temptation; and during the first years of British power in Bengal, and in a less degree in the Carnatic, it appeared as if the only result of Plassey and Wandewash were to inflict upon the unhappy Indians a plague of devouring locusts. British influence—it was not yet British rule—appeared in these years to be a mere curse.

Thus the acquisition of power in India thrust upon the British peoples and their rulers a problem of unexampled difficulty, the like of which had never had to be faced by any nation in the world's history. How was this strange power, which the course of events had thrust into British hands, to be employed? Was it to be used merely for the exploitation of the subject peoples, and the enrichment of their conquerors? Or were the distant Islands of the West to find some means whereby their power should bring an increase, not a diminution, of justice and liberty? How were the habits of life and thought of a Western people to be adjusted to the social life and the political systems of a land so utterly unfamiliar as India?

These were immense and exacting problems, even more difficult than the problems created by the establishment of British supremacy in the North American Continent. But in 1760, when Clive came home to enjoy his triumph and to restore the fallen fortunes of his family, the magnitude and complexity of these problems were not yet apparent. The one obvious and outstanding fact was that the power of the old rival France had been shattered even more completely in the East than in the West, and that by a sort of miracle Britain had become the mistress of an amazing new empire. Throned on the seas, she wielded at once the sceptre of the Old World and the New. That

was enough for the men of 1760, while the great war was still raging.

[Muir's *Making of Modern India*; V. A. Smith's *History of India*; Roberts' *Historical Geography of India*; Wheeler's or Innes' *Short History of India*; Dodwell's *Dupleix and Clive*; Forrest's *Life of Clive*; Lyall's *Rise and Expansion of the British Power in India*; Malleson's *The French in India*; Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power upon History*; Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas*.]

CHAPTER IX

THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE culmination of splendour and success which was attained by the British Commonwealth in 1763 was immediately to be followed by a period of great change and great problems—the period of the American Revolution, of the Agrarian and Industrial Revolutions, of the awakening of Ireland to a sense of her grievances, of the beginning of a demand for political reconstruction in England, and, finally, as the climax of all these revolutionary movements, of the French Revolution. Under the impact of these successive upheavals the old social order and the old political ideas were to be challenged and eventually overthrown ; and it is necessary, before we turn our attention to these tremendous events, that we should obtain as clear an idea as possible of the old order which was to be so profoundly transformed.

§ 1. *The Prosperity and Freedom of England.*

A historian of the period has made the large claim that except in the Roman Empire under the Antonines there has never been a country or a period in which prosperity was so widely diffused or contentment so general as in England during the first half of the eighteenth century. We shall see that though this may be true, it suggests a too rosy view of the time. Yet the statement was not without justification. Foreign observers who visited England during this period—and they were numerous, because England was widely regarded as the very model of a free, prosperous and orderly State—almost unanimously fixed upon two main themes for their praises : the general comfort of the people and the freedom which they enjoyed.

Even the poorest classes, these observers noted, did not need to go barefoot, or to wear wooden shoes, like the

peasantry of France ; they mostly ate wheat-bread, an unheard of luxury among the poorer classes on the Continent ; there were few families which did not have meat at least three or four times a week ; the general impression left with the traveller was that of a well-clad and well-fed people, very different from the ragged and emaciated peasantry of France. And although a closer analysis of the conditions does not wholly bear out these assertions, it is impossible to disregard them. With the possible exception of the Dutch there was no people in the Old World among whom there was a higher standard of comfort than among the English ; they were only surpassed, in all the world, by their own daughter communities in the New World, which enjoyed the inexhaustible riches of a virgin land. There was much to deplore in their condition, as we shall see. But they were at least happier than the inhabitants of any other European country, and probably happier than their own ancestors in any period of their history.

As for their freedom, in that respect they were incomparably better off than the people of any other country save the British colonies. Serfdom had ceased altogether to exist in England. Every man might think or say or write almost what he pleased, and there was no serious restraint upon the expression of opinions. In theory at all events, if not always in practice, the law was the same for all men, rich and poor. There were no caste restrictions recognised by law, and a man of vigour and enterprise could make his way in most careers. All this was true, even if it was also true (as we shall see) that this freedom was in practice restricted in many ways. And it was further true that a very much larger proportion of the English people had the right and the opportunity to take a share in the management of common affairs than was the case in other countries. Though England was far from being a democratic country, she was in a real sense a self-governing country ; and her superiority in this respect aroused the envy and admiration of foreign observers. As we shall see, material qualifications must be made to the sweeping statements about English political liberty in which the panegyrists of the British constitution were fond of indulging. But at least it is true that the British peoples had advanced further along the painful and difficult road towards real political and social freedom than any country in the world had yet done. They were the pioneers of liberty.

§ 2. *English Rural Society and its Organisation.*

Despite the rapid progress of her foreign trade and of her manufacturing industries, England was still predominantly an agricultural country, and more than three-fourths of her population lived on and by the land. The great bulk of this large number—that is to say, the main body of the English people—belonged to the class which worked with its own hands on the land: the peasantry. But there was very wide diversity among the members of this class. Some were hired servants living with their employers. Some were day-labourers, earning a wage by working on the land of others; but these in very many cases had a patch of land of their own, and in most cases could keep a few geese, or a pig, or even a cow, with the help of the village commons, which also provided them with fuel; while their wives and daughters could supplement the family income by spinning yarn for the weavers: their bare wages by no means represented their real incomes. Others had little farms of their own which occupied almost the whole of their own and their families' labour, though sometimes they might do a few days' work for a large farmer, and some of them might occasionally employ a day-labourer. There was thus a gradation among the hand-workers of agriculture; there were prospects and possibilities of advancement; and the majority of the members of this class had some interest in the land they tilled.

The class of the peasantry shaded insensibly into the next class, the cultivators of substantial farms who worked their farms by hired labour. This class included both men who owned their own farms—still a large number—and men who paid rent for them; it may be conveniently described as the Yeomanry, though strictly speaking the term should be reserved for small proprietors. Between the prosperous peasant who occasionally hired extra labour, and the small yeoman who worked hard alongside of his men, there was no sharp distinction; the one easily passed into the other. In the same way the yeoman class shaded insensibly into the class above it, that of the squirearchy, who may be described as the class which drew its livelihood from the rent of land. There was very little difference between a substantial yeoman and a small squire who farmed some of his own land. Thus the agricultural society, though it was divided into grades, was more or less homogeneous, and there

were no such sharp distinctions of classes and interests as later arose.

This homogeneity of village society was accentuated by the way in which most villages were organised. In spite of the large number of 'enclosures' which had been made during the previous centuries, probably three-fifths of the cultivated land of England was still organised on the open-field system. Under this system the arable land of the village was divided into very large fields, each having many strips held by many cultivators, all of whom had to agree to grow the same crops, and to plough, sow and reap at the same times. After the crops were cut, the big fields could be used for pasture, and there had to be agreement as to the number of beasts each villager was entitled to turn into the fields. Then every village had its meadow-land for hay; many villagers shared in the hay in agreed proportions; and the meadow-land also was used for pasture when the hay was cut. Finally almost every village had its wide expanse of common land, used by all for pasture and often for peat-cutting. This system had the great drawback that it made the introduction of new crops or improved methods very difficult, and presented serious obstacles to agricultural development. But just for that reason it protected the small man against the competition of his more enterprising neighbour. It also turned the village into a real community, in which everybody had a part; for all had their share in the annual discussions as to what crops should be grown, and when they should be sown and cut; and in the election of the numerous petty village officers whose services the system demanded.

The system could not last permanently. Indeed, it was already slowly decaying. In large parts of the country it had practically disappeared. Even where it survived, the more substantial proprietors had in many cases succeeded in getting their holdings concentrated in a single block, cut out from the common fields and 'enclosed,' which they could cultivate as they thought best, without being bound by the agreements of the whole village. But over the greater part of England the system still survived in a more or less complete form, and with it survived the community-spirit which it engendered. Even where it had almost wholly broken up, the village commons still generally survived, and these were in many respects treated as common property under common management.

Moreover, alongside of the village organisation of agricul-

ture there was the parish organisation, which managed local roads and little local charities, and, above all, the administration of poor relief. The controlling body of the parish was the vestry, originally an assembly of all ratepayers which met once a year to elect parish officers, to receive the reports of the outgoing officers, and to fix rates. In many cases the open vestry had been displaced by a 'select vestry' of the leading people of the village. But in very many cases the open vestry still survived, and everybody could be present at its meetings. In practice the work was usually done by a few of the more substantial men, who took turns in serving (without pay) as overseers and churchwardens; but the ordinary villagers knew what was going on, and had their share in it.

The life of the English peasants, who formed the majority of the nation, was no doubt a hard and laborious one. But it was not a hopeless life. It had prospects for the industrious. It had the pleasures of companionship and of common responsibility. Most of the peasants were illiterate, though village schools were growing up here and there. They knew little or nothing about what was going on in the outer world, or about the great affairs of national politics. But they had their traditional songs and folk-tales; and Puritanism had failed to stamp out the healthy rough merry-making of village life. In the main the English village was a free society; especially because it was a homogeneous society, in which there were no sharp or rigid barriers between classes.

But there was one respect in which this freedom was seriously qualified, especially for poor men; and this was due to the operation of the Poor Laws. Since the Poor Laws threw upon each parish the responsibility for maintaining its own poor, every parish was anxious not to have too many poor residents 'settled' upon it. A series of Acts of Parliament, the first of which was passed soon after the Restoration (1662), had endeavoured to define what constituted a 'settlement' which would give to poor men the right to obtain relief from the parish; and these Settlement Acts gave to the parishes, in effect, the power of refusing to a man who was likely to become a burden on the rates the right of settling in the parish. This constituted a real restriction upon the freedom of movement of poor men who could not find employment in their own parishes. The number of such poor men was steadily growing during this period, just because the old system was slowly breaking up.

Poor rates were everywhere growing. It had been found necessary in 1722 to empower groups of parishes to set up workhouses to give employment to their poor. The problem of dealing with those who were displaced by the dissolution of an old and settled order was already becoming difficult in the first half of the eighteenth century. It was not yet very serious, because the breaking up process had not yet gone very far; the vast majority of Englishmen still lived out their lives in the villages in which they were born. But the tremendous changes of the next era were to make it a very terrible problem; and, as we shall see, the attempts to solve it were conceived in so short-sighted a way that they led to disastrous and cruel results. One of the main causes of this was that the problem of unemployment and poverty was never treated as a national problem on broad lines, but was in the main left to be dealt with by each parish or group of parishes by itself, and by the justices of the peace in each county. And as the parishes, chiefly concerned to keep down their rates, tried to do so by preventing the immigration of families who might become burdensome, the result was to draw poor men into a sort of slavery. The working of this system was a serious blot on English society in the period with which we are now concerned. It was not yet very grave, because the great majority had a more or less assured position. But the survival of this system through the next period, when the old order was breaking up in all directions with very great rapidity, inflicted a large amount of unnecessary misery, and needlessly intensified the evils which so great a change was in any case bound to produce. It is a fair ground of criticism against the timid and hand-to-mouth policy of the Whig oligarchy that they failed to make any attempt to deal broadly and generously with this problem while it was still of manageable dimensions.

§ 3. *The Ruling Classes: the Squirearchy and the Magnates: an Aristocratic Society.*

The natural leaders of this homogeneous society of landowners and tillers of the soil were the Squires, the substantial landed proprietors or country gentlemen, who lived in the thousands of rural manor-houses scattered all over the country. And this leadership was recognised in the political powers which they exercised. They were, as they had been ever since the thirteenth century, the most politically active

class in the community, its representatives and its real rulers. As Justices of the Peace they carried on the whole work of local administration; and in performing this work they were scarcely at all checked or controlled by the central government. Under the Tudors and Stewarts the Privy Council had maintained a close supervision over them; they had been in the main simply the local agents of that powerful body. But under the Whig oligarchy—and, indeed, ever since the Restoration—the Privy Council had become mainly a formal body. The Cabinet, which took its place, consisted of ministers who were primarily concerned with questions of national policy; it was nobody's business to devote special attention to local government; and, accordingly, the Justices of the Peace were in the main left to their own devices, subject only to general regulations made by Parliament, whose members were nearly all themselves country gentlemen and Justices of the Peace. Sitting jointly in Quarter Sessions at the county town, the justices of each county dealt with serious offences against public order, managed county affairs, controlled the main roads and so forth; sitting in smaller groups in Petty Sessions, they dealt with minor offences; while as individuals each, in his own justice-room in his own manor-house, exercised large powers of committing persons to trial, and supervised the working of the village administration and especially the management of poor relief.

The powers which they wielded as Justices of the Peace gave to the squirearchy a very remarkable ascendency. They were like little kings in their own villages, and if they chose to behave as petty tyrants, as they sometimes did, there was very little chance of redress. Yet, on the whole, they performed their duties, if not with great enlightenment, at any rate with a good deal of public spirit and neighbourly good feeling. The literature of the century abounds with portraits of the Justices of the Peace. But if there are many descriptions of petty tyrannies, there are as many of generous, public-spirited and large-minded performance of public duties. Over against Fielding's description of Squire Western must be set his portrait of Squire Allworthy, and Addison's of Sir Roger de Coverley. It was only when the agrarian and industrial revolutions in the second half of the century brought about a great cleavage in rural society, and destroyed the community-spirit which had held English villages together, that the Justices of the Peace came to be regarded

as enemies and oppressors of the poor. In the first half of the century they were still on the whole the accepted leaders of rural society. And if, in their enthusiasm for field-sports, they were already disproportionately severe against breaches of the Game Laws, that was not yet a very grave matter. For the Game Laws were not yet the ferocious and tyrannical things they later became; the preservation of game had not yet become the chief interest of the rural gentry; and the peasantry were not yet reduced to such a state of misery as to be driven to wholesale poaching to keep the breath in their bodies. These things were to happen later. In 1750 the squires were still the natural leaders of a homogeneous rural society, and the great powers which they wielded, though too unchecked, were on the whole reasonably and healthily employed, and represented a natural mode of organisation which ensured that common affairs should be managed in sympathy with public sentiment.

Just as the peasantry shaded into the yeomanry and the yeomanry into the squirearchy, so the squirearchy shaded into the supreme class, whom we may call the Magnates. These were, in truth, simply squires on a very great scale, often owning estates in many parts of the country, maintaining princely state in splendid mansions, and coming together annually for the season in London. This regular assemblage of the great leaders of English rural society did indeed give a unity to the whole of England, every part of which had its representatives in the intimate luxurious life of the capital during the season. It was as natural that the magnates should in the main govern the country as a whole as it was that the yeomen should in the main govern the village and the squires the county. The magnates were in a real degree in touch with the local life of England; as Lords-Lieutenant they were the leaders of county affairs; and their activity in electioneering business [1] had at least this advantage that it gave them an intimate knowledge of the feelings and desires of the whole country. So long as their interests were not in conflict with those of the mass of the people whom they ruled—and as yet there appeared to be no such conflict—these great rural magnates seemed to be the natural leaders and spokesmen of this homogeneous, rural society. Their immense political power, therefore, was not as unrepresentative of the national mind as it might at first sight appear to be. Until the time when the transformation

[1] Electioneering methods are described above, Chap. i. p. 656.

of the social system made them no longer the natural leaders of English society, they ruled the country by 'consent.'

The little group of great families who dominated British affairs during this period in many ways resembled the great senatorial families who ruled Rome during the most splendid period of the republic. They formed a very exclusive society, closely linked by intermarriage. They were on the whole a highly cultivated body of men, with a fine taste in the arts and a real delight in literature; many of them were widely read in the great literatures of Greece and Rome. They encouraged and rejoiced in the utmost freedom of thought and speculation, and many of them gave their patronage to thinkers, men of letters and artists. They travelled widely, especially in France, and many of them had an intimate knowledge of European conditions, which gave them a great advantage in dealing with questions of foreign policy. In their country palaces and in their town mansions they lived a life of great luxury and splendour, and sometimes of fantastic extravagance; and the clubs which they created in London as the centres of their social activities ensured that they were mostly on terms of intimate acquaintance with one another. Under these conditions, national politics became almost a family affair.

The magnates were full of pride, and very conscious of their own dignity. They had both the virtues and the defects that mark most oligarchies. They thought it right and natural that all power should rest in their hands, and that they and theirs should be enriched by pensions and offices at the cost of the State. But they had also a high sense of personal and national honour, and a real feeling that *noblesse oblige* to public service. With their great wealth they might easily have been content with a life of idleness; but few of them gave way to the temptation, and many of them spent laborious days in the work of Parliament and the administrative offices, or trained themselves to serve the State in arms by sea or land. Few of them were lazy triflers; and they did much to establish the tradition, which has been one of the strongest things in English public life—stronger perhaps than in any other country—that public service has a rightful claim upon the time and thought of all who are not wholly engrossed by the demands of livelihood. They had a real pride in their country and in its traditions of law-abiding freedom; and if their conception of liberty was a narrow one, it was sound so far as it went, and it was a great gain that liberty and equal laws should

be proclaimed as the supreme governing principles of the State, even if they were narrowly conceived. When all is said, the British realms were almost the only lands in the world which had emblazoned these principles upon their banner.

On the other hand the magnates were slow to understand the needs of other countries which they did not know. The self-complacency which marks all oligarchies blinded them to the grave injustices they were perpetuating in Ireland, and to the magnitude and difficulty of the problem of combining freedom with the unity of the Commonwealth in the young lands beyond the seas; nor could this body of aristocrats understand or sympathise with the democratic society of New England. Above all, they were terribly blind to the needs and sufferings of the poor in their own country. They could not rise to the conception of the State as a great free partnership for the common weal. That is a conception slow to arise anywhere; it did not yet exist in any of the countries of Europe; but the self-complacency of this small, brilliant, powerful society made it impermeable to such an ideal. They thought of the whole nation as living under their shadow, secure in their protection; they thought of the poor as owing their livelihood and their safety to the rich; they were, as Burke put it, the great oaks which sheltered the field, and they did not see that their spreading roots often hampered the cultivation of the soil, and that their luxuriant branches often shut out the sun.

This was to become terribly apparent in the next age, when the great social transformation changed the whole texture of English society. In that age the ascendency of the great families was to be as ruinous to the social health of the British peoples as the ascendency of the senatorial oligarchy in the last century of the Roman republic was ruinous to that of Italy. But as yet this evil effect of oligarchic rule was not apparent, because the great landowners were the natural leaders of a nation which still consisted mainly of men interested in the land; and it may fairly be said that the rule of the great families, despite its defects, had been of real service, by destroying the possibility of despotism, by perfecting the machinery of parliamentary government in a form which was capable of being turned to the needs of a more genuinely national co-operation in government, and by maintaining a high sense of national honour and a fine tradition of the obligation of public service.

The extraordinary ascendency of the land-owning magnates was the chief feature of English life in the eighteenth century. It was the natural result of the predominance of the landed interest in the life of the nation. But it extended itself over almost the whole organisation of the nation's life and thought. The Established Church was treated simply as an appendix of the State. Its offices, all but the humblest, provided respectable positions for younger sons. Its bishops and deans were members or protégés of the great families, and shared in their life and ideas; its parochial clergy belonged to the class of the squirearchy, often sat with them on the bench, and gave more attention to public than to religious duties. The function of the Church was to be decent, dignified and orderly, and to teach the people to be so—not to challenge them to live nobly, or remind them that they were sons of God.

The legal profession was even more directly incorporated with and controlled by the ruling class. All the great judicial offices were filled by members of that class, and the highest of these offices formed the most frequent mode of access to the inner sanctum of the House of Lords. The system produced some really great lawyers, for the great families had a profound respect for law, and regarded its interpretation and enforcement as the highest function of the State. But the lawyers inevitably regarded their functions in the light of the ideas of the class from which they were drawn; they were the chief upholders of the fundamental idea that the land-owning class formed the most essential and vital element in the State.

The universities, again, had been in effect annexed by the great families. Their sons attended them with special privileges, wearing the tuft that marked the 'nobleman.' Dons and tutors looked to noble patronage for promotion, and became 'tuft-hunters'; the mass of undergraduates, preparing themselves for the Church or the bar or public life, either belonged to the class of the squirearchy or looked to the ruling class for their future careers; and thus the universities became funnels through which the ability of the country was sucked into the service of the oligarchy. In the same way the great public schools, Eton and Winchester, Westminster and Harrow, originally founded for the education of poor scholars, had become the training grounds of an aristocracy. Here, amid Spartan conditions, the sons of the ruling class were trained to be loyal gentlemen and good sportsmen, and to know something of that

world of old Rome which their own lives were so nearly to reproduce. Through these schools, with their traditions of loyalty and self-government, and their insistence upon self-restraint and the rules of a rigid 'good form,' the proud aristocracy of the eighteenth century has handed down, more completely than in any other part of English life, that which was best in their manners and ideals, and has diffused it gradually among other elements of the population.

§ 4. *The Commercial and Industrial Interests: the Growth of Capitalist Control.*

The ascendency of the landed aristocracy, thus buttressed by the Church, the law, and the most ancient and powerful educational institutions of the country, was all the more complete because there were as yet no other economic interests which at all compared in importance with those of the land. Although it was by the development of commerce and industry that the wealth of the British realms was being increased, and their position in the world established, and although, for that reason, commercial and industrial questions occupied much of the attention of government and Parliament, the representatives of these great interests had very little direct political power; they could and did influence, but they did not directly control, national policy in these respects.

The most powerful group independent of the landed interest consisted of the great bankers and foreign merchants. A few of them sat in Parliament, as members for London and one or two of the chief ports. They were, in fact, few in number, and were mostly congregated in London, the headquarters of the greatest financial corporations, the Bank of England, the East India Company, the South Sea Company, the African Company. In the management of these great concerns they found sufficient occupation for all the thought and leisure they could spare from the conduct of their private businesses, and they were content to leave the management of national affairs in the hands of the landowning magnates. Through the bank and the other great companies, indeed, they wielded great power, especially because it was they who found the money for carrying on national wars. They were generally able to impose their own conditions in regard to industrial and commercial policy without themselves wielding political power or occupying any public office; for no government dared disregard them. Moreover

they had long been intimately linked with the governing families; most of them were ambitious of becoming members of the landowning aristocracy, and spent much of their wealth in buying landed estates. Their influence was strong enough to ensure the triumph of their ideas as to what national interest demanded in the sphere of economic policy, and it has left its mark deeply upon the statute book. But the men who worked for them, the sailors and the clerks, had no direct spokesmen in the national government. It was nobody's business to see that they enjoyed decent conditions of life.

The development of foreign trade was the chief pride and the chief interest of England in the first half of the eighteenth century, but it had brought about also a great expansion in manufactures; and the manufacturing system was beginning to pass through a crisis, due to the fact that the limits of expansion possible under the old methods had almost been reached.

The greatest of English industries, beyond comparison, was the woollen manufacture. It was still carried on by hand-looms. But the rate at which cloth could be produced from the looms was dependent upon the amount of yarn which could by produced by the spinners. The yarn was still spun by women, working at home on the old-fashioned spinning-wheel; and the demand for it was so great that in almost every part of the country the wives and daughters of poor folk made a substantial addition to the family income by spinning. Even so, it was often impossible to keep the weavers' looms going on full-time work; and the result was that many weavers combined work at the loom in their own cottages with the cultivation of a little land. This was especially the case in the Yorkshire woollen area, in the dales of the West Riding. Here the trade was mainly carried on by home industry; the weaver worked up on his own loom the yarn spun by his wife and daughters and by other women in the neighbourhood; took his piece of cloth to sell in Leeds market; and between-whiles tilled his allotment. Under these conditions he could afford to work for long hours in his spells at the loom without sacrifice of health. He was his own master; he fixed his own hours.

But in other regions, and notably in the West of England area (Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset) another method of organisation, which had long been practised, had now definitely got the upper hand. The capitalist had taken the industry under his control. Substantial men, known as

'clothiers,' kept large numbers of weavers in their employment, sometimes providing them with their looms, or even bringing them together to work in a central place under supervision, and keeping them supplied with yarn bought from the spinners over a large area. Under these conditions the weavers ceased to be their own masters; they became, in a greater or less degree, 'hands,' working for an employer at fixed wages. The system had some advantages. It economised labour. It brought about a better organisation of the various stages in the process of manufacture. It enabled styles and patterns to be more intelligently fixed in view of the needs of the home or export market. But it left the weavers very much at the mercy of the clothiers for whom they worked. It robbed them of their independence. The clothier was tempted to demand long hours of work, and to pay the lowest wage for which he could get labour.

The workman no longer had the protection of the old craft-gilds which had in the Middle Ages regulated the conditions of labour by co-operative agreement. When the craft-gilds broke down, the Tudor and Stewart governments had tried to do their work by regulating wages and (to a less extent) conditions of labour, mainly through the Justices of the Peace. But under the Whig oligarchy the attempt to work out a national system of protection for labour was abandoned, and the weavers (and in the same way the workers in other industries which were passing under the control of capitalists) were left without protection, unless they could somehow devise it for themselves. From the point of view of the governing class, it was the great clothiers who were responsible for the organisation and expansion of industry, and they must not be interfered with. And it was doubtless true that but for the better organisation which the clothiers provided, the industry could scarcely have expanded as it did. But the maintenance of a healthy and self-respecting population is an even more important national interest than the increase of wealth; and this the system disregarded. No very widespread evils had yet arisen as a result of the growth of the new system, because as yet the weaver mainly worked at home, often had a patch of land of his own, and was usually paid customary wages which bore some proportion to the cost of living. But many of them were in a very unhealthy condition, working too long hours, losing their real freedom, unable to make proper provision either for their children or for old age. Already

there was some indication of the tragic miseries which were to come when new industrial conditions were created by the great inventions of the next period.

What has been said of the woollen manufacture, the premier industry of England, is equally true of the infant cotton industry of Lancashire, which was beginning to produce considerable quantities of cloth woven from a mixture of linen and cotton, and very suitable for the tropical trade, or of the silk industry, which had found a home in Spitalfields and elsewhere. Though there were no such abject miseries as the next period produced, there was a good deal of suffering ; and but a small share of the wealth which growing trade and industry poured into England went to improve the conditions of life of the labouring poor. Thanks to the way in which it was organised, industry was not producing much, if any, betterment in the mass of the nation's manhood. But the proportion of the population engaged in industry was still so small that the significance of this was not realised.

Still more was this true of the mining industries, which almost necessarily fell under capitalist control. Mining was as yet a minor industry. The iron-fields of England were becoming less instead of more productive, because iron could only be smelted by burning wood, and the supply of timber was running out : this difficulty was especially felt in Sussex, hitherto the main source of supply of English iron. Coal was used, as yet, only for domestic fires ; it had not yet become the key of all industry, as it was rapidly to become in the next age ; and only a few mines were worked, chiefly in the Newcastle district and in the Wigan area. But wherever it was carried on, mining was the worst-treated of all industries, and miners were universally regarded as the most depraved and brutalised elements in the nation. Their needs and claims were wholly neglected, until Whitefield and the Wesleys came to give them the consolations of religion, and to remind them that they too were sons of God, as precious in the sight of Heaven as the brilliant and cultivated aristocrats who managed the affairs of the nation.

It would be unfair to blame unduly the ruling class of this period for their failure to work out an intelligent system of protection for those who were engaged in the manufacturing industries. They knew little or nothing about these industries. They were anxious that the industry and trade of the country should be developed as rapidly as possible ; they believed that every increase in its volume must be to

the advantage of the workmen equally with the masters; they thought that the best way of increasing British trade was by making trade-agreements with foreign countries, by opening up new markets, and by using their power to kill competition from Ireland and the colonies. That was the universal belief of the age; it was not merely the limited view of a small governing class. The complex and difficult problems affecting the organisation of national industry in its relation to national well-being were only beginning to be explored; Adam Smith had yet to write his great book, which was the foundation of intelligent thinking on these problems; and even when the most acute intelligence began to be devoted to them, the principles which at first seemed to be established appeared to justify the belief that any attempt to interfere with the processes of industry would only lead to disaster. But, without blaming anybody, we have to note that the brilliant development of British wealth and power was attended by shadows, as yet faint, but destined to become deeper and blacker.

The manufacturing and trading interests had in effect no share in the government of the country; some of their chief centres, like Manchester, were unrepresented; and the representation of most of the boroughs which did return members was controlled, as we have seen,[1] by the landowning interest. But they possessed in some degree their own machinery of local government. Every borough, large or small, had its town council, whose jurisdiction was singularly free from any control by the central government. It is true that these councils were not popularly elected, but almost universally filled up vacancies in their own membership as they occurred. But the total number of men who through these councils had some share in the management of public affairs was large; and in many boroughs the presiding officers, mayors and bailiffs, were elected by the whole body of freemen.

The town councils, however, took no very large or generous view of their functions. They represented only a privileged group of burghers, and their main business was to administer the ancient inherited properties and privileges of these burghers, the town-lands, the town-dues, the town-markets. They were loth to undertake any new duties, such as those of providing paving, drainage and water-supply for the growing towns which the development of trade and industry was bringing into exist-

[1] See Chap. i. above, p. 657.

ence. To deal with these new needs new bodies were beginning to come into existence, created by private Acts of Parliament on the application of the residents in individual boroughs; and these new bodies were as a rule popularly elected by the ratepayers, and empowered to levy rates for the special services they were established to render.

The system of urban local government in England during this period was far too complicated and variable to be described in a few sentences. It followed no system; it varied from place to place; it was unregulated and uncontrolled by the central government. Not even in the most powerful boroughs did there exist any single authority invested with powers sufficient to enable it to deal with all the needs of growing populations; and those places which did not possess chartered rights descending from the Middle Ages, however large and important they might be, had to be content with the same organisation as the villages—the old feudal manorial court, and the parish vestry. This chaotic system, or absence of system, was to cause great evils in the coming time of rapid change; and the oligarchy who ruled England in this age may well be blamed for having done nothing to provide the towns with an orderly and efficient system of government. But as yet the deficiencies of this state of things were not very apparent; the mediæval machinery still worked reasonably well. And it is fair to add that in the town councils, narrowly as they conceived their powers, in the new boards which were being created to remedy their deficiencies, in the parish vestries, which in the largest towns as in the villages managed the administration of poor relief, and in the old traditional manor-courts which had to undertake so many new and difficult functions, a great multitude of men were in fact practising the arts of self-government with better results than might have been anticipated. The English were still a self-governing people, though their system needed reconstruction, and was ill-adapted to meet the terrible strain that was soon to fall upon it.

§ 5. *The Growth of Prosperity in Scotland.*

The first half of the eighteenth century was for Scotland the beginning of a new era. When the century opened she was still a very poor country, full of turbulence and disorder; the Highlands especially were in a state of tribal anarchy and barbarism; almost the only features of hope and promise in the life of the nation were the stern discipline

of her Church and the work of her schools and poverty-stricken universities; and in all the material aspects of civilisation she was at least three centuries behind England. Travellers in Scotland were struck, in the Lowlands as well as the Highlands, by the wretchedness and dirt of the houses, the poverty of the greater part of the people, the multitude of beggars, and the backwardness of agriculture and industry. Wheaten bread, which every peasant used in England, was in Scotland a luxury known only to the well-to-do; oatmeal brose, sometimes enriched (in the Highlands at any rate) with blood drawn from the living cow, or peasemeal, seemed to be the almost universal fare; and half the population seemed to go barefoot. Agriculture was hampered by outworn mediæval restrictions and by the inadequacy of the implements and methods employed; there were scarcely any industries of importance; even the fisheries in the swarming seas which surrounded the country were undeveloped, and were exploited by far more Dutch than Scottish ships; and foreign trade was almost negligible. Not only were the Highlands themselves in a condition of inconceivable rudeness and anarchy, but the Lowlands were perpetually raided by Highland robbers: the most famous of all the Highland caterans, Rob Roy Macgregor, was at the height of his activities, waging war with all his neighbours, defying outlawry and living by plunder; he died peacefully in his bed in 1736, at the age of eighty.

From these miseries Scotland was able to rescue herself by four facts: the union with England, which gave her the chance of developing her trade and industry; the overthrow of tribal anarchy in the Highlands after 1745, and the abolition of the powers of chieftains in the Highlands and feudal lords in the Lowlands by the destruction of 'heritable jurisdictions' in 1747, which followed Culloden; the cessation of religious persecution, which was the result of the Revolution; and, finally, the development of a universal system of popular education, which had been planned by Knox, but was never fully carried out until the eighteenth century. These events did not, of course, produce an immediate result. The beneficent result of the union, for example, did not begin to be apparent until about 1730. But by the middle of the century the tide had turned: modern Scotland was coming to birth.

It was perhaps in the Highlands that the change was most marked; and here, apart from the cessation of tribal war, the first results did not seem to be altogether happy.

The noblest thing in Highland life had been the romantic and chivalrous devotion of the clansman to his chieftain: in the hard years following 1746, when many chiefs were outlawed and their lands confiscated, this devotion had displayed itself in a wonderful way by the contribution, out of grinding poverty, of large sums for the upkeep of the exiles, or by the beautiful loyalty with which the hiding-places of those who remained in the country were concealed.[1] Yet in many cases this loyalty was ill-rewarded. Under the Heritable Jurisdiction Act those chiefs who had not been outlawed became landlords of the clan lands instead of chieftains. Many of them, eager to make the maximum amount of money, turned the glens into sheep-runs, and pitilessly evicted their clansmen, now become their tenants. As a result thousands of them had to emigrate, though emigration was peculiarly painful to the Highlander, speaking a tongue uncomprehended beyond his native hills. Thousands more enlisted in the army: the Highlands were beyond comparison the best recruiting grounds of the British army during the next two generations, and the kilt won deathless glory in the fields of Spain and the Netherlands, India and America. Many of those who remained won but a bare and precarious living as crofters and fishers. Yet, though romance might lament the disappearance of the wild old life, the new conditions were certainly an improvement. The Highlander learnt to substitute a national for a tribal loyalty. He was drawn with Celtic enthusiasm into the stern religious life of his country, which had hitherto little affected him. He began to play his part in the universities, and to make his own distinctive contribution to the imagination and thought of the world. And he had become a member of a great commonwealth which beckoned his adventurous spirit to every quarter of the globe.

In the Lowlands the transformation was more gradual, but even more radical. The frugal, shrewd, patient genius of the Lowlander began for the first time systematically to turn its attention to the business of wealth-making, of which he had hitherto had little experience: he was soon to show that this was not because he lacked qualifications. Already the Scots had seen, more quickly and more clearly than the English, the strength that could be drawn from a sound system of banking—perhaps because, in a poor country where nobody had much capital to dispose of, the advantages of pooling many small sums was more easily appreciated.

[1] Stevenson's *Kidnapped* gives a fine picture of these conditions.

It was a Scotsman who originated the scheme of the Bank of England; Scotland herself already maintained no less than three considerable banks, in spite of her poverty; she was, in 1750, in advance of England in the development of banking facilities outside the capital; and undoubtedly this was one of the reasons why a country so poor was able very rapidly to win great wealth. In 1750 she had already developed to real prosperity the linen industry, which had been in a very backward and struggling condition at the beginning of the century; she was creating a woollen industry of her own in the Tweed country; and these products gave her something to form the basis of an export trade. In 1718 the first ship was launched on the Clyde: till then Glasgow had not even owned a single vessel, but had carried on her almost negligible foreign trade in ships borrowed from Whitehaven. By 1760 the Clyde had already become an important shipbuilding centre; Glasgow had opened up a vigorous traffic with the New World; she handled more tobacco than any other British port save London. Plainly the tide had turned.

No small part of the credit for the skill and patience with which poverty-stricken Scotland was making for herself a new wealth was due to the fact that she was educating all her people in her parish schools: her system of popular education was definitely in advance of that of any other European country, and immeasurably ahead of that of England. It was a *system*, not (like such popular schools as existed in England) an accidental growth. It was planned on a national basis by the General Assembly of a democratic Church, and assiduously nurtured by the ministers in every parish, who, unlike the Anglican clergy, were themselves of the people. They were narrow, hard, tyrannical in the use of the extraordinary powers of moral discipline which they claimed and exercised: there was much that is repellent in their work. But they trained the whole nation to study and to think, not only by maintaining schools, but also by the hard intellectual discipline of their sermons and their catechism. Moreover the Scottish universities—poor and mean places as they were in comparison with Oxford and Cambridge—were stirring into a new life: they were beginning to produce that remarkable series of philosophical teachers who in the second half of the century contributed to transform the thinking of Europe. In these years David Hume, a Scot, though not connected with a Scottish university, was accepted as the most profound and challenging

of writers in English; and soon Adam Smith, a Glasgow professor, was to give a new turn to scientific thinking on economic and political questions. The hard discipline of the Scottish Church system was beginning to bear its fruits in other spheres besides the ecclesiastical.

It was still through the Church, also, that Scotland was training herself in self-government. Her share in the British Parliament meant nothing to the great majority of her people: in boroughs and counties alike the number of electors was so small that it was easy to get control over them, and there was no section of the united Parliament that was so easy to manage, or so completely at the disposal of the great Whig borough-mongers. Until 1832 the Scottish representatives in Parliament could not be said to speak for the Scottish people. Nor was there any effective system of local self-government in Scotland such as formed the pride of England. It was through the Church, and its parish sessions, presbyteries, synods and General Assembly, that the Scots were training themselves for future participation in the life of a Commonwealth of free nations.

The period was thus for Scotland one of beginnings. In all respects save education she was still far behind her great partner. There was still far more suffering among her poor than there was in England. The shadows that attended her slowly rising prosperity were yet deeper than those which attended the secure and growing wealth of England. If the English miners, for example, were a degraded and neglected class, the miners of Scotland (not yet numerous) were in a still more unhappy plight. For Scottish colliers and salt-workers were in this period actually serfs—the only legal serfs in the islands—bound to the mines or quarries which they worked, and passing with them from one owner to another.

§ 6. *The Stagnancy of Ireland.*

It is needless to say much about the condition of Ireland in the middle of the eighteenth century, for we have already described[1] the ugly system of oppression to which the majority of her people had been sentenced by the Revolution settlement. She lay chained and bound, helpless, stagnant and motionless.

The great mass of her population, whether they belonged to the Protestant minority or to the Roman Catholic

[1] See above, Bk. v. chap. vi. pp. 586 ff.

majority, drew their livelihood from the land. But most of the land was in Protestant hands ; Catholics were forbidden by law to acquire land except as tenants. Many of the landlords, especially the greatest among them, were habitual absentees, living in England, and spending there the rents which were exacted from their tenants by agents. Others spent their time largely in hunting and drinking : the Irish country gentry had become notorious for the reckless and thriftless joviality of their life. They took, except in rare instances, no interest in the improvement of their lands, but were content to draw their rents. Between these resident gentry and the peasantry relations were not unfriendly, in spite of the religious differences which separated them, and the miserable penury to which the system condemned most of the peasants. Good-fellowship and the common love of sport tended to ease and obscure the cruelties of the system. On the whole, though nothing had been done to relax the Penal Code, the position of the Catholics had improved by the middle of the century. Religious intolerance was dying out, largely because the Protestants had ceased to fear a Catholic revolt ; Catholic priests were allowed to go about their business without interference ; and the guerilla warfare which had been waged by bands of ' tories ' and ' rapparees ' for a generation after the Revolution had practically come to an end. Ireland seemed to be quiet.

Nevertheless the country was in an unhappy state. Respect for law is the very foundation of a healthy society ; and respect for law could not and did not exist in Ireland. It was destroyed among the Catholics by the iniquity of the laws to which they were subject ; it was weakened among the Protestant landlord class by the feeling that they were above the laws, which existed for their protection. No society can be healthy unless its members can feel that its organisation, however defective, is meant to help and protect them. That feeling was impossible for the majority of Irishmen, who knew that society was so organised as to deny them all civic rights, to forbid them to educate their children, to exclude them from the means of attaining prosperity, and to ruin and destroy their religion. These were the express objects of the Irish system.

We have seen[1] that the development of all industries save the linen manufacture had been crushed by the English Parliament. This meant that except in the small linen area

[1] See above, pp. 506, 587.

the whole population had to draw its livelihood directly or indirectly from the land. But even the resources of the land could not be fully developed, since the export both of wool and of woollen manufactures was prohibited, and even Irish cattle could not be sent to England. To some extent the prohibition of the export of wool was evaded, and there was a very large smuggling trade with France, which increased the general contempt for law. In spite of the prohibition of the export of wool and cattle, much of the best land in Ireland was given over to pasture, which employed little labour in comparison with agriculture. The result was that there was terrible competition for the land which remained, and extortionate rack-rents were charged for the smallest plots. Living in the most abject penury the peasantry had neither the means nor the knowledge to cultivate their land properly.

It may safely be said that in no country of the world was destitution so great as in Ireland. 'Never did I behold,' wrote a Protestant bishop on being transferred to an Irish see, 'even in Picardy, Westphalia or Scotland, such dismal marks of hunger and want as appeared in the countenances of most of the poor creatures I met with on the road'; and he describes how, one of his carriage-horses being killed, a crowd of famished peasants tore the flesh from its bones to take to their children. After a bad season, under such conditions, the most appalling famines almost inevitably resulted. In 1740 and 1741 it is said that 400,000 perished of starvation and of consequent diseases; and the pictures of horrors drawn by those who witnessed this famine surpass imagination or belief. Well might Burke say, of the system which produced such results, 'It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.'

§ 7. *The British Lands oversea: their Social Character.*

From Ireland, the one land to which membership of the British Commonwealth had brought nothing but evil, it is refreshing to turn to the oversea settlements created by the strenuous activities of the previous century and a half. For in these settlements, under a political and legal system wholly derived from England, there were to be seen an abounding prosperity, a progressive energy and a wide

diffusion of political liberty, such as could be seen scarcely anywhere else in the world.

These settlements fell into two main groups, the West Indies and the continental colonies; the little group of the Bermudas, far out in the Atlantic, forming a sort of link between them. But each of the two great groups was divided into a number of separate colonies, which, though they had many interests and many characteristics in common, had no common centre of government, but were equipped with their own governors and their own representative assemblies. Hence, apart from the parent islands, and leaving out of account the newly established British power in India and the trading stations on the West African Coast, the British Commonwealth already included no less than twenty-three distinctly organised States, all subordinate to the British Crown, and (though in a more indefinite way) to the British Parliament, all priding themselves upon their British citizenship, nearly all possessing representative institutions, and all linked together by the same imperial system of trade regulation.

Of these twenty-three States, five were included in the West Indian group; which had, in 1760, attained almost its highest degree of prosperity. There was the great island of Jamaica, upon which depended several tiny islands, as well as certain logwood-cutting stations on the coast of Honduras, later to develop into the colony of British Honduras. Long the headquarters of piracy, and hampered by constant wars with the descendants of Spanish slaves (known as Maroons) who had their fortresses in the wooded mountains of the interior, Jamaica had nevertheless developed into a highly prosperous colony, where a planter aristocracy employed an army of negro slaves in the cultivation of sugar and other tropical products. In 1763, Jamaica was more prosperous than it had ever been, for the war had brought it great riches; and at a time when the whole commercial world valued the West Indian trade beyond all others, Jamaica seemed to many to be 'the brightest jewel in the British Crown.' The island of Barbados, almost the oldest of the British West Indian settlements, ranked next after Jamaica in wealth and population. Its white inhabitants included many Irishmen; they had shown great zeal in raising contingents of volunteers to take part in the war. Next came the federated group of the Leeward Islands, St. Kitts, Antigua, Nevis, Montserrat, Barbuda, Anguilla and the Virgin Islands, which had now fully

recovered from the set-back caused by the struggle of the seventeenth century with France. The Bahama Islands formed a fourth separately organised group; long infested by pirates, they had only begun to enjoy settled order and prosperity during the generation before 1760. Finally, the conquests of Pitt had added a new group in the Windward Islands—Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent, Tobago and the little Grenadines—which, being close neighbours of the great French islands, Martinique and Guadeloupe, had already seen, and were still to see, more fighting than any other group. But in 1763 they were a new acquisition, scarcely yet settled, and only beginning to be provided with the normal institutions of the British colonial system.

All these five colonies, though separately organised, were marked by common features. They were all (except the Bahamas) devoted mainly to the cultivation of sugar. They were all dependent mainly upon slave-labour, and their negro population outnumbered their white population, in many cases, by ten to one. Their whole social structure, the very foundations of their prosperity, rested on the assumption (which was as yet unchallenged) that negro slavery was legitimate. Their white population constituted, therefore, a proud aristocracy, with the defects, but also with many of the virtues, of an aristocracy. And in any case they were a free aristocracy; for each island-group had its representative assembly, and made its own laws.

Sharply contrasted with the West Indian colonies was the little group of the Bermudas, far out in the Atlantic, whose total area only amounted to nineteen square miles. With no great natural resources, these tiny islands nevertheless supported a considerable population. They were able to do so because their enterprising settlers had shown great vigour in ship-building and in trade. They had played a lively part in the settlement of the Bahamas and other West Indian islands. They were very active in privateering during the war. And their ships were to be seen in every harbour both of the West Indies and of the continental colonies. Freedom and enterprise marked none of the British colonies in a higher degree than this little group, which was almost the earliest of the whole brotherhood.

Of the sixteen distinct colonies on the mainland of North America, three had been the subject of long conflict with the French. Canada, just conquered, and peopled, as yet, wholly with Frenchmen, was naturally still under military

rule. Newfoundland, the scene of the first British experiment in colonisation, had long been disputed with the French, and only became finally and definitely British in 1713. Even then the French had retained certain rights, for fishing purposes, over a part of the coast. The settlers were still but a small number of hardy fishermen scattered along the shore; and it was only since 1728 that they had enjoyed organised government. Nova Scotia, which had been twice conquered from the French during the seventeenth century and twice restored, had been finally ceded to Britain in 1713; but it was only since 1755, when the French settlers were deported[1] and 4000 British immigrants were brought in, that Nova Scotia became in any full sense a British colony. She had obtained the normal institutions of representative government in 1758. But the participation of these three St. Lawrence colonies in the history of the British Commonwealth was only beginning in 1763.

The greatest glory and pride of the Commonwealth at that date consisted in the thirteen free States which were soon to break away and found a new independent commonwealth of their own. Their progress during the first half of the eighteenth century had been amazing. At the beginning of the century the West Indian colonies had been regarded as more important, or at any rate as commercially more valuable, than the continental colonies. But even in regard to trade, the latter now took first place: their exports to England were rather larger than these of the West Indies, and their imports from England were twice as great. And in all other respects—in population, in enterprise, in the development of a progressive civilisation, they stood far ahead not only of the British West Indies, but of any colonies that had been established by the European peoples.

In 1760 their total population numbered about a million and a half, of whom nearly half a million were negroes. This represents an increase of more than 700 per cent. since the Revolution. The settled and cultivated area showed an increase proportionate to the growth of population; it now extended to the edge of the mountain belt. Along the great length of the western border there was a vanguard of adventurous frontiersmen and pioneers, who had begun to find their way across the hills into the great central plain, even before the overthrow of the French, and who were now ready to enter into that great heritage.

[1] See above, Chap. vi. p. 724.

In the more settled regions a highly developed civilisation had already been established. There were thriving and prosperous towns, notably Boston, New York and Philadelphia. There was cultivated society, not only in these towns but among the planter aristocracy of Virginia. Education was widely diffused, especially in New England. Already there were the beginnings of a newspaper press; and colleges which were to develop into universities had been established in all the more populous and progressive colonies. Not only were representative assemblies everywhere in existence, and everywhere active; not only were the white settlers everywhere protected in their civil liberties by the usage of English Common Law; not only was religious toleration everywhere practised; but (what is far more difficult to secure) a real degree of social equality existed, because the inexhaustible abundance of unoccupied land made it unnecessary for any white man of vigour to remain in a condition of permanent dependence.

The widely diffused prosperity of the colonies was, of course, due to the inexhaustible riches of a new land; their unrestrained freedom to the fact that in this new land traditional restraints and inherited obligations did not, for white men, exist. But it was only in the new lands peopled from Britain that these blessings were fully enjoyed. Before long the colonies were to revolt, not against any grave oppression, but against an invasion of their political liberties which no other people would have dreamed of mentioning. The spirit which could be so ready to resist any, even the most modest, infraction of freedom was itself a product of the liberty which the British system had planted and nurtured.

To white men, beyond a doubt, these happy lands afforded a degree of freedom and of opportunity not to be attained anywhere else in the world. But there was a dark shadow in this otherwise bright prospect. Nearly one-third of the population consisted of negro slaves, who enjoyed no share in these blessings. The slaves were naturally most numerous in the planter-colonies of the south, where the staple industries largely depended on their labour. But they were to be found in all the colonies, even in the Puritan north; and everywhere they were subject to extremely harsh and even ferocious laws, drawn up by the colonial legislatures. Even the free negroes were nowhere allowed the civil liberties that belonged to white men. The harshness of these laws was perhaps not unnatural in the southern

colonies, which lived in fear of black rebellions; and the fear was sometimes justified. There was less excuse in the northern colonies, where (except in New York) the negroes formed a small minority of the population. Yet Quaker Pennsylvania ordained, for example, that any negro found 'gadding about' on Sunday should be locked up without meat or drink until Monday, and should then receive thirty-nine lashes 'well-laid on' before being released; while Puritan Massachusetts enacted that all free negroes should be bound to white masters, and that any free negro sheltering a negro slave should be heavily fined and flogged. Like the West Indian colonies, those of the American continent were still far from being ready to share with all men the freedom which their white inhabitants so abundantly enjoyed. In this respect, at least, the mother country was well in advance of her daughter states; for in Britain slavery was practically non-existent, and in 1772 it was to be declared, by a great judicial decision, to be inconsistent with the Common Law of England.

The thirteen colonies fell into three clearly marked groups, sharply distinguished from one another by their social systems. The first group consisted of the New England colonies—Massachusetts (with Maine as a dependency), New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Connecticut; these four colonies had a population of nearly 500,000. The second group consisted of the Middle colonies, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, with a population of over 400,000. The third group included the southern or planter colonies, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, with a population of over 700,000 including 250,000 negro slaves.

The New England colonies were essentially agricultural settlements. They had scarcely yet begun to develop manufacturing industries, except in the crudest forms. But under the shelter of the British Navigation Acts, which placed their shipping on equal terms with that of the mother country, they had developed a large oversea trade, especially with the other colonies and with the West Indies; they had also a share in the West African slave-trade; and they had shown themselves during the war expert and active in privateering, at the expense not only of French but of Spanish and Dutch shipping. They were more vigorous and enterprising than any of the other colonies, and had taken the largest part in every phase of the long struggle with France. They were also the best educated of the colonies, having a

school in every parish: they alone had developed the beginnings of a literature of their own; and, as in Scotland, the hard discipline of their Church system had strengthened their intellectual grasp, and made them lovers of disputation. The bitter religious intolerance of New England had indeed been largely moderated by the middle of the eighteenth century. There were now many religious sects in all the New England colonies, and there was no religious persecution. But the old dour Puritan temper was by no means dead. It showed itself in an austerity of life which made the New England colonies less attractive to immigrants than the other colonies; and for that reason they retained a more marked unity of character than their neighbours. And the fondness for discussing principles, and the stiffness in maintaining them, which Puritanism had engendered, still survived. It found a vent in constant controversies with successive governors, and also in a keen interest in law: the New Englanders were a notably litigious people. From the time of their establishment, these colonies had been distinguished as the most unmanageable of all the American colonies. Now, with their steadily expanding commerce (much of which was carried on in direct defiance of the trade regulations), they were tempted to be more critical and more prickly than ever. Their system of government, local as well as central, had become, under the Charter of 1691, genuinely democratic. There was no serious poverty among them. Hard-working, thrifty, enterprising, intelligent, clean-living, tenacious of their rights and full of self-complacency, the New Englanders formed a magnificent stock, though scarcely a genial one.

The middle colonies were the most cosmopolitan of the group. Though the bulk of the settlers were British, there were also many Dutch, Swedes, Swiss and Germans; and the variety of religious denominations was as great as that of races. For these reasons the middle colonies had no such clear-cut character, and no such highly organised unity of sentiment, as the New England colonies. On the other hand there was in them a greater social freedom, because of the absence of any single dominating standard of life such as existed in New England. Like New England, they were chiefly concerned in agricultural work, though they also carried on (especially in New York) an active trade with the Indians; while Pennsylvania had begun iron-works. They exported a large part of their products to the West Indies; but they traded mainly with British ports, and did not

defy the prohibition of trade with the French West Indies on anything like the same scale as the New Englanders. It is noteworthy that the bulk of this oversea trade belonged to Pennsylvania, not to New York, which, though a thriving port, was still far from attaining the primacy in American trade that was later to fall to it. The rapid development of Pennsylvania was, indeed, one of the most striking features of colonial history during the first half of the eighteenth century. More and more this colony attracted to itself the main stream of emigration from Europe. Poor emigrants were brought out on an undertaking to pay for their passage by working for three to five years without wages. But at the end of this period it was the practice in Pennsylvania to give to the immigrant a grant of fifty acres of land. This attraction drew especially a steady stream of emigrants from Germany; and the German settlers, who clung together in defined areas and maintained the use of their native tongue, formed a very substantial element in the population. Under an Act of the British Parliament of 1740, alien immigrants acquired the full rights of British citizenship after seven years' residence. They were thus able to take a part in politics such as had never been open to them in their homeland. But the German settlers were docile folk, who brought with them no traditions of self-government. They were content to leave political power in the hands of the English element. Hence it came about that the Quakers, though now a small minority in the population, still retained control of the government of Pennsylvania. The Quakers were obstinate folk, as they showed when, at the crisis of the struggle with France, they refused to vote either men or money even for the defence of their own frontiers. But the communities of the Middle Colonies as a whole, just because of their lack of homogeneity, were more docile and more easily handled than the New Englanders. They seem also to have shown less resentment against the trade regulations; at all events, they did not openly defy them as New England did.

The southern colonies were all alike distinguished by the fact that they depended economically on slave-labour. There were slaves in the other colonies—there were even slave-revolts, very cruelly suppressed, in New York—but elsewhere slaves were used mainly as domestic servants: in the southern colonies the conduct of the staple industries mainly depended upon negro slaves, who formed one-third of the population in Maryland and Virginia, and

two-thirds in South Carolina. A slave-owning society is seldom a democratic society; and alongside of the negro slaves, in all the southern colonies, was a large population of 'mean whites,' many of whom had originally come out as transported convicts. Shiftless and idle, they formed an element in the population unlike anything in the more northerly colonies; but in that happy climate they found it easy to live somehow, as hangers-on of the planter aristocracy. All the southern colonies were, indeed, essentially aristocratic in character. But an aristocracy can be as proud and as tenacious of its rights as any democracy; and while the easy-going and lavish-living Virginian gentleman was above troubling himself about trade regulations, he could be as stiff as the New Englander (or the British aristocrat) when he thought his rights were threatened.

§ 8. *Problems of the Commonwealth.*

The British Commonwealth, which emerged triumphant from the ordeal of war in 1763, manifestly the greatest power in the world, was a loosely organised bundle of communities, no one of which, not even the happiest, could be described as having won for its citizens the full enjoyment of justice and freedom, yet all of which, with the flagrant and tragic exception of Ireland, had attained a nearer approach to both justice and freedom, and were more palpably striving after them, than most societies that had yet existed on the face of the earth. With that tragic exception, they formed a fellowship or partnership of free communities, the like of which history had not yet seen.

The triumph of 1763 was the culmination of the first great phase in the history of the Commonwealth, to which it opened a magnificent vista of opportunity. But 1763 was not only the culmination of past history, it was the opening of new and vast problems, such as had never yet been set before any group of peoples. The supremacy of the seas had been won: how was it to be used? Was it to be used in a spirit of mere domineering ascendency, like that which had earlier led Spain and Portugal to their ruin? Or was it to mean a greater freedom and a greater security of the seas for all peoples, and a restriction of opportunities for none? The foundations of an amazing and undesired dominion had been laid in India: how was it to be used? Was it to be used (as the spirit of a trading company might naturally suggest) merely for the exploitation of unhappy

subjects? Was it to be, like earlier dominions in India, a sway exercised solely for the profit of the rulers, or was it to bring to the Indian peoples an enlargement of justice and of liberty? Supremacy over the whole North American continent had been won for the British peoples and for the English tongue. But that momentous decision raised fresh problems. It raised the problem of dealing with an alien and proud people in conquered Canada. Were they to be dealt with in the spirit of mere ascendency, which had been allowed unchecked sway in Ireland, or were they to enjoy freedom for their own mode of life, and a liberty larger than they had hitherto known? It raised also the problem of the relations between the mother country and her proud and free daughter States. Was that to be a relation of dominion on the one side, dependence on the other, or could some mode of organised partnership be wrought out? In all the new lands, but especially in the West Indies, the amazing growth of wealth and power had been won at the expense of the servitude and suffering of multitudes of unhappy negroes. Could the freedom of the British Commonwealth be extended to them also? Could this iniquity be got rid of without a ruinous dislocation? At home in the islands the misery of Ireland affected not only herself, but shamed and weakened the whole Commonwealth. Could it be amended? In Great Britain the power of a proud aristocracy, necessary perhaps as a stage in the development of political freedom and as a security against despotism, was manifestly becoming harmful and acting as a restraint upon freedom. Could it be replaced by a more generous system of co-operation in the direction of public affairs? The machinery of local self-government, which had done so much for England, was becoming rigid and unreal. Could it be revitalised? The marvellous economic progress which the British peoples were making was enriching the nation indeed, but by the forms which it was assuming was tending to diminish the freedom and happiness of very large elements in the population. Could this progress be enhanced and accelerated without hurting the happiness of the mass of labouring men?

All these problems, and many others besides, presented themselves inevitably to the triumphant British peoples. Has a more difficult bundle of problems ever been laid before any generation? They had to be dealt with by fallible men, largely unconscious of the magnitude of the issues which faced them, and governed, as all men at all times are

governed, by the traditions and presuppositions which belonged to their generation. They made many blunders, and answered many of the questions in a disastrously wrong sense. Nevertheless the period during which they had to answer them was one of the most instructive, as it was one of the most critical, in the history of the British Commonwealth. It will be dealt with in our next volume; and in view of the momentousness of the issues then to be raised, we may well feel that the triumphs of 1763 ought to be regarded not merely as the climax of a long and varied story, but as the preamble of a story yet more complex, more stimulating and more noble, a story which the Fates are still telling.

[Lecky's *History of England and Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*; Traill's *Social England*; Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*; de Saussure's *Foreign View of England in the Reign of George I. and George II.*; S. and B. Webb's *English Local Government*; Nichol's *History of the Poor Law*; Hasbach's *English Agricultural Labourer*; Graham's *Social Life in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*; Channing's *History of the United States*.]

CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX

[Only the principal events referred to in the text are included, together with a few events not mentioned in the text, which are inserted for purposes of reference.]

DATE		PAGE
Dateless.	The New Stone Age (Neolithic)	6
,,	The Bronze Age	7
,,	Stonehenge	7
B.C. (*c.*) 600	Invasions of the Gaels	7
c. 400	Invasions of the Britons	7
325	Voyage of Pytheas	8
55-54	Julius Cæsar in Britain	9
B.C. 27-A.D. 14	*Augustus first Roman Emperor*	—
A.D. 43-61	Roman Conquest of South Britain	9
84	Battle of Mons Graupius	9
c. 125	Erection of the Roman Wall	10
c. 305	St. Alban, the first British Martyr	—
from 375	Barbarian Irruptions into the Roman Empire	12
410	The Romans abandon Britain	10, 12
449	Legendary date of the first Teutonic settlement in Britain (Hengist and Horsa)	15
c. 450	St. Patrick in Ireland	19
481-511	Clovis and the Frankish Conquest of Gaul	12, 16, 18
490	Theodoric and the Ostrogoths conquer Italy	12, 16, 18
c. 500	'King Arthur' and the British Resistance	15, 108
503	The Scots invade Scotland	18, 19
c. 516	The Saxons driven back at Mount Badon	16
563	St. Columba at Iona	19
577	Battle of Deorham	15
597	Landing of St. Augustine	19
613	Battle of Chester	15
617-85	Supremacy of Northumbria	21
632-40	Mohammedan Conquest of Syria and Persia	18
635	St. Aidan at Lindisfarne	20
664	Synod of Whitby	20
669-73	The English Church organised by Theodore	20
685	Battle of Nectansmere	21
711	The Saracens reach Spain	18, 22, 196
723	St. Boniface in Germany	21
732	Battle of Poitiers	22
c. 732	Completion of Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'	21
758-96	*Offa king of Mercia*	21, 107
768-814	*Charlemagne king of the Franks*	21, 22
789	First Viking raid on England	23, 26, 27
800	*Charlemagne crowned Emperor*	22, 83
802-39	EGBERT	21, 22, 23, 28
825	Battle of Ellandun	21
829	Egbert overlord of all England	21-3
843	Formation of a united kingdom of Scotland	31
,,	A Northman overlord of Ireland	27
854-5	A Danish settlement in Thanet	28
867-70	The Danes settle in Yorkshire and East Anglia	28
871	Battle of Ashdown	29
871-99	ALFRED THE GREAT	29-31
878	Treaty of Chippenham	29
886	Danes confined to 'Danelaw'	29, 38
899-924	EDWARD THE ELDER	31, 32, 114
909	Founding of Cluny Abbey	38
913	Northmen in Normandy	26, 36, 41
913-18	The English regain Mercia	31
924-40	ATHELSTAN	32-34
937	Battle of Brunanburh	32
959-75	EDGAR	33, 38
960	Dunstan, Abp. of Canterbury	34, 38
962-73	*Otto I. Emperor*	33, 192
978-1016	ETHELRED THE REDELESS	34, 35
980	The Danes explore Greenland	26
987	*Hugh Capet king of France*	33
991	Battle of Maldon	34
992	'Danegeld' imposed	34, 45
1002	Massacre of the Danes	34
1013	England submitted to Sweyn	35
1014	Battle of Clontarf: the Danes driven from Ireland	28
1016-90	Norman Conquest of Sicily and Italy	39, 41, 55, 84
1016	EDMUND IRONSIDE	35
1016-35	CANUTE	35, 37
1018	Battle of Carham: Lothian added to Scotland	35, 49, 113
1042	EDWARD THE CONFESSOR	36
1042-6	Lanfranc at Bec	36
1055-65	Westminster Abbey rebuilt	36, 92
1066	HAROLD II.	36, 37
,,	Battle of Stamford Bridge	37
,,	Battle of Hastings	37, 40, 42
,,	WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR	37, 39, 42-48, 58, 60, 69, 108
1070	Lanfranc undertakes the reform of the Church	47
1075-85	'Investiture' contest between Gregory VII. and Henry IV.	39, 43

DATE		PAGE
1086	Oath of Salisbury	43
"	Domesday Book	46, 58
1087	William II.	45-48, 109
1095-99	The First Crusade	41, 46, 54
1097	Banishment of Anselm	48
1100	Henry I.	44-46, 48, 51, 109
1106	Battle of Tenchebrai	46
1107	English settlement of the question of 'Investitures'	48
1122	Concordat of Worms: end of the Investiture contest in Europe	48
1124-53	*David I. king of Scotland*	49, 50, 114
1128	The Cistercian Order established in England	53, 74
1135	Stephen	48, 49
1139-53	Civil War in England	48, 51, 53
1146-87	The Second Crusade	53
1152	Marriage of Henry of Anjou and Eleanor of Aquitaine	52, 63
1152-90	*Frederick Barbarossa Emperor*	52-5
1154	Henry II.	52-63, 65, 66, 71, 109, 114
1159-83	Contest between Frederick Barbarossa, the Papacy, and the Italian Cities	52, 55
1164	Constitutions of Clarendon	52, 60, 73
1165-1214	*William the Lion king of Scotland*	56, 61, 114, 115
1166	Assize of Clarendon: the Jury of Presentment	58, 59, 71, 203
1170	Strongbow in Ireland	56
"	Murder of Becket	60
"	Inquest of Sheriffs	58
1171	Henry II. Lord of Ireland	56
1174	William the Lion does homage for Scotland	56, 61, 114
1176	Assize of Northampton	58
1177	Council of Oxford: the Welsh pay Henry homage	109
1180-1223	*Philip Augustus king of France*	56, 63, 124
1181	Assize of Arms	59
1189	Richard I.	54-56, 61
1190-94	Richard absent on the Third Crusade	61
1190-97	*Henry VI. Emperor*	55, 61
1194-99	War with France	61
1194-1240	Llywelyn the Great prince of North Wales	110
1198-1216	*Innocent III. Pope*	52, 62, 83, 193
1199	John	56, 62-64, 66, 83, 84, 95
1202-4	Loss of Normandy	63, 86
1205-13	John's quarrel with the Pope	62, 83
1207	Langton, Abp. of Canterbury	63, 95
1213	John becomes the Pope's vassal	62, 83, 84, 95, 150
1214	Battle of Bouvines	64
1214-95	Life and work of Roger Bacon	91, 93
1215	Magna Carta	63-66, 95, 387, 389, 398
1215-50	*Frederick II. Emperor*	84, 97
1216	Henry III.	66, 92, 95-99, 110
1221-24	The Mendicant Friars settle in England	90, 93
1224	Genghiz Khan invades Russia	88
1226	The Teutonic Knights in Prussia	85
1226-70	*Louis IX. king of France*	87, 99, 124
1242-3	Loss of Poitou	96
1246-83	Llywelyn ap Gruffydd prince of Wales	97, 99, 110, 111
1246	Carpini sent to Asia by the Pope	88
1249-86	*Alexander III. king of Scotland*	114-5
1253	Louis IX. sends Rubruquis to the East	88, 238
1254	Sicily offered to the Earl of Lancaster	84, 97, 99
1257	*Richard of Cornwall crowned Emperor*	84, 97
1258	Provisions of Oxford	98, 99
1259	Treaty with France	99
1263	Battle of Largs	114
1264	Mise of Amiens	87, 99
"	Battle of Lewes	99
1265	Simon de Montfort's Parliament	99
"	Battle of Evesham	100
1270-95	Marco Polo in Asia	86, 88, 238
1272	Edward I.	98-106, 111, 112, 115-118, 122, 124, 133, 152
1273-91	*Rudolf of Habsburg Emperor*	85
1275	First Parliament of Edward I.	102, 144
1277	Treaty of Conway	111
1278	Writs of 'Quo Warranto'	104
1279	Statute of Mortmain	105
1282-4	Conquest of Wales	82, 106, 111, 122
1285	Statute of Winchester	104, 152
1285-1314	*Philip IV. king of France*	87, 106, 124
1291-1399	Swiss Independence attained	85
1291-2	Edward I. asserts feudal superiority over Scotland: *John Balliol king of Scotland*	115
1294-1303	War with France: Balliol aids the French	102, 103, 105, 106, 115, 124
1295	The Model Parliament	102, 144
1296	First Conquest of Scotland	106, 116
"	Issue of bull 'Clericis laicos'	105
1297	Confirmation of Charters: restriction of the king's powers of taxation	103, 105
"	Battle of Stirling Bridge	116
1298	Battle of Falkirk	116
1303-05	Second Conquest of Scotland	106, 117
1305	Wallace executed	117
1305-76	The Popes at Avignon	89, 124, 142, 194
1306-29	*Robert Bruce king of Scotland*	117-119, 122, 146, 186
1307	Edward II.	118, 119, 122, 145-147
1310	The Lords Ordainers appointed	145
1314	Battle of Bannockburn	118, 146
1315-18	Edward Bruce in Ireland	119, 189
1322	Thomas of Lancaster executed: Parliament of York: concurrence of 'the community' in legislation laid down	146, 149
1327	Deposition of Edward II.	147, 160
1327	Edward III.	119, 120, 122, 123, 125-129, 138, 147-151, 166, 189
1328	Treaty of Northampton: recognition of Scottish independence	119
1328-50	*Philip VI. king of France*	125
1329	*David II. king of Scotland*	119, 120, 124, 126

DATE		PAGE
1332-41	Edward Balliol in Scotland	119, 125
1338	Edward III. claims the French crown	125
1340	Parliament asserts control over taxation	149
„	Battle of Sluys	125, 138
1342	Invasion of Brittany	125
1346	Guienne attacked	126
„	Battles of Cressy and Neville's Cross	120, 126
1347	Capture of Calais	123, 127, 128, 129, 137
1348-9	The Black Death	127, 135, 136
1349	Ordinance of Labourers	135, 150, 154
1350-64	*John king of France*	123, 127
1351	First Statute of Provisors	142, 150
1353	First Statute of Præmunire	150
1356	Battle of Poitiers	123, 127
1360	Treaty of Bretigny	128
„	Institution of 'Justices of the Peace'	152, 202, 212, 339, 343
1361	Battle of Adrianople: the Turks established in Europe	88, 200
1362	English becomes the language of Parliament and the law-courts	141
„	Parliament claims control of the Customs duties	149
1366	Statute of Kilkenny	189
1367	Battle of Navarete	129
1370	Massacre of Limoges	123, 129
1370-89	Disasters of the French War	129, 153
c. 1370-1400	Geoffrey Chaucer's literary activity	92, 140, 141, 335
1371	*Robert II. king of Scotland*	120, 187
1372	Battle of La Rochelle	129
1376	Death of the Black Prince	151
„	The Good Parliament: Institution of Impeachment	151
1377	'Piers Plowman' written	140, 141
„	RICHARD II.	129, 153, 155-161, 190
1378-1417	The Great Schism	89, 194
1379-82	Wycliffe's activity	142, 154, 158
1380-1422	*Charles VI. king of France*	166, 168
1381	Revolt of the Peasants	136, 142, 154
1382	Wycliffe's doctrines condemned	158
1388	The 'Merciless Parliament'	154, 157
1389	Battle of Kossovo: Turks supreme in the Balkans	200
1389-97	Richard rules with the aid of Parliament	157, 158
1390	*Robert III. king of Scotland*	187
1393	Great Statute of Præmunire	159
1394	Richard II. visits Ireland	190
1396	A truce with France	129, 158
1397	Union of Kalmar (Denmark, Sweden, and Norway)	197
1398	Parliament of Shrewsbury	159
1399	Deposition of Richard II.	160
„	HENRY IV.	160-163, 165, 166, 190
1400-6	Rising of Owen Glendower	112, 161, 185
1401	The statute 'de hæretico comburendo'	161, 263
1403	Battle of Shrewsbury	161
1406	*James I. king of Scotland*	186, 187
1411	Alliance with Burgundy	166
1413	HENRY V.	163-168, 173, 190
1414-18	Council of Constance	194, 247
1414	University of St. Andrews founded	187
„	Lollard Conspiracy	163
1415	Battle of Agincourt	163, 167
1419	Murder of the Duke of Burgundy	167
1419-36	Struggle of Bohemia against Habsburg rule	158, 246, 364
1420	Treaty of Troyes	168
1422	HENRY VI.	168, 175-181
1422-35	Duke of Bedford Regent	169-171, 175
1422-61	*Charles VII. king of France*	168-171
1429	Joan of Arc relieves Orleans	170
1430-31	Capture and death of Joan of Arc	170
„	Limitation of the Franchise to forty-shilling freeholders	174
1431-49	Council of Basle	194, 247
1434	Peace between the Duke of Burgundy and Charles VII.	171
1436	The English lose Paris	171
1437	*James II. king of Scotland*	187
1450	Battle of Formigny and loss of Normandy	171, 177
„	Jack Cade's Rebellion	177
1451	Glasgow University founded	187, 275
1453	Battle of Castillon and loss of Aquitaine	171, 177
„	Fall of Constantinople	201, 222
1454	The Duke of York made Protector	171
1455-85	Wars of the Roses	178-183, 185
1460	Battle of Wakefield	178, 179
„	*James III. king of Scotland*	187
1461-83	*Louis XI. king of France*	181, 182, 196
1461	Battles of Mortimer's Cross and Towton	179, 180
„	EDWARD IV.	179-182, 187
1464	Battles of Hedgley Moor and Hexham	180
1469	Scotland acquires the Orkney and Shetland Islands	115, 187
1469-71	Struggle between Edward IV. and Warwick	181
1471	Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury	181
1475	Treaty of Pecquigny	182
1476	Caxton's Printing-Press	225
1477	Marriage of Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy	199
1479	Union of Aragon and Castile	196
1483	EDWARD V.	182
1483-98	*Charles VIII. king of France*	230, 231
1483	RICHARD III.	182, 183
1485	Battle of Bosworth	183, 185
„	HENRY VII.	210-214, 217-220, 231, 244
1487	Battle of Stoke	211
„	Statute against 'Liveries and Maintenance'	211, 213
„	Court of Star Chamber	213, 387, 433
1488	*James IV. king of Scotland*	220, 221
1492	Granada conquered by Spain	196
„	Treaty of Étaples	231
„	Columbus' first voyage	233, 239, 244
1492-97	Risings of Perkin Warbeck	121
1493	Papal division of new discoveries between Spain and Portugal	239, 245

DATE		PAGE
1494	Poynings' Acts	219
„	Charles VIII. invades Naples	230, 231
1494-98	Savonarola's ascendency in Florence	247
1496	The 'Magnus Intercursus'	217
1497-8	Cabot in America	244, 314
1497-9	Voyage of Vasco da Gama	240
1498-1515	*Louis XII. king of France*	232
1499	Colet and Erasmus at Oxford	226
„	Louis XII. captured Milan	232
1500	Cabral discovers Brazil	241
1501	Marriage of the Prince of Wales and Catherine of Aragon	231, 252
1502	Marriage of James IV. of Scotland and Margaret Tudor	220
1509	HENRY VIII.	214-216, 218, 220, 227-229, 232, 233, 235, 249, 251-265, 275-278, 324-327
„	Henry marries Catherine of Aragon	232, 252, 255
1509-15	Albuquerque governor of the Portuguese E. Indies	240, 372-375
1511	Henry VIII. joins the Holy League	220, 232
1512	Spain conquers Navarre	196
1513	Machiavelli's 'Prince'	228
„	Battle of Flodden Field	221, 275
„	*James V. king of Scotland*	275-277
1514	Alliance with France	232
1515-47	*Francis I. king of France*	232-5, 244
1515-29	Wolsey chief Minister of State	215, 216, 227, 232, 235, 252
1516	'Utopia' published	227
1517	Luther protests against 'Indulgences'	234, 249
1519-21	Cortez' conquest of Mexico	243
1519-22	Voyage of Magellan: circumnavigation of the Earth	242
1519-55	*Charles V. Emperor*	199, 233-235, 243, 249-251, 261, 268, 324
1520	Luther burns the Pope's Bull	249
1520-66	*Solyman I. Sultan of Turkey*	234
1521	Diet of Worms	234, 249
„	The Turks capture Belgrad	234
„	Controversy between Henry VIII. and Luther	249
1522	War with France	216, 235, 275
1523	Parliament refuses supplies	216
1524-5	Revolt of the German Peasants	250
1525	Battle of Pavia	235, 250
„	Treaty with France: the 'Balance of Power'	236
„	Tyndale's English Bible	254
1525-35	Pizarro's conquest of Peru	243
1526	Baber founds the Mogul Empire in India	374, 762
„	Diet of Speyer: the 'Protestants'	250
„	Battle of Mohacz: Turkish conquest of Hungary	234, 523
1527	Henry seeks a divorce	252
1528	William Hawkins reaches Guinea	304
1528	Patrick Hamilton, the first Scottish Protestant martyr	221, 277
1529	Fall of Wolsey	252

DATE		PAGE
1529-36	The Long Parliament of the Reformation	253-255, 257
1532	Act of Annates	255
1533	Henry marries Anne Boleyn	252-256
„	Act of Appeals: Cranmer adjudges Henry a divorce	255
1534	Council of Wales	260, 433
„	'Submission of the Clergy'	254, 255
„	Acts of Supremacy and Succession	256
1534-36	Cartier discovers Canada	244, 379
1534-40	Thomas Cromwell in power	253, 256, 257, 260, 261
1535	Sir Thomas More executed	248, 256
1536	Calvin's 'Christianæ Religionis Institutio'	—
„	Union of England and Wales	260
„	Henry marries Jane Seymour	256
„	The 'Ten Articles'	257
„	Suppression of the lesser monasteries	257-259
„	Pilgrimage of Grace	259, 262
1537	Council of the North set up	260, 433
„	Execution of the chiefs of the Geraldine clan	325
1539	Suppression of the greater monasteries	257, 258
„	Order of Jesuits founded	288
„	Act of Proclamations. Act of the Six Articles	260, 263
1540	Calvin dictator of Geneva	251, 263, 280
1541	Henry proclaimed King of Ireland	56, 324
„	Jesuits in Ireland	322, 324
1542	Henry's settlement of Ireland	323-327
„	Battle of Solway Moss	276
1542-68	*Mary Queen of Scotland*	277-279, 285, 289, 291-295, 301
1543-46	War with France	261, 275
1544	Sack of Edinburgh	261, 278
1545	The English ravage the Lowlands	278
1546	Charles V. summons the Council of Trent	251, 287
1546-60	John Knox's labours for Calvinism	279-286
1547	EDWARD VI.	262, 264-267
1547-51	Somerset Protector	263-265, 278
1547	Battle of Pinkie	264, 278
„	Suppression of the Chantries	265
1548	Betrothal of Mary of Scotland and the Dauphin	264, 268, 279
1549	First Book of Common Prayer and Act of Uniformity	212, 263-265
„	Religious rising in the West of England	264
„	Rising against 'Enclosures' in Norfolk	258, 264, 342
1552	2nd Book of Common Prayer	265, 272
„	Second Act of Uniformity	266
1553	MARY I.	266-271, 306, 325
„	Chancellor reaches Archangel	304
1554	Mary of Guise Regent of Scotland	280-283
„	Rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt	268

DATE		PAGE
1554	Marriage of Mary and Philip of Spain	268
„	Execution of Lady Jane Grey	269
„	Restoration of papal authority in England	269
1554-5	Revival of statutes against heretics	269
1555	Abdication of Charles V.	268
1555-58	Mary's religious persecutions	269-70
1556-98	*Philip II. king of Spain*	268, 270, 288-291, 295, 298-303, 315, 319, 330-332
1556-1605	*Akbar Mogul Emperor of India*	374
1558	Loss of Calais	270
1558-60	Jenkinson's travels in Russia and Asia	305
1558	ELIZABETH	271-273, 289-295, 298-301, 306-312, 326-328, 332, 346-354, 388
1559	Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity	272, 273, 347
„	Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis	282, 288
„	Rebellion of the Scottish Protestants	282, 289
1560	England helps the Scottish Protestants	283
„	Siege of Leith: death of Mary of Guise	283
„	Reform of the Church of Scotland	284-286, 406
1560-67	Rebellion of Shane O'Neill	326
1561	The 'Book of Discipline' drawn up by Knox	284, 285
„	Mary's return to Scotland	285, 292
„	David Wolfe lands in Ireland	328
1562	Hawkins' first Guinea voyage	309
1562-98	Wars of Religion in France	290, 299
1562	Elizabeth aids the French Huguenots	290
1563	The 'Thirty-nine Articles	273
1564	Birth of Shakespeare	—
1565	Marriage of Darnley and Mary Queen of Scots	293
1566	Murder of Riccio	293
„	'Advertisements' of Parker	348
1567	Murder of Darnley: Mary marries Bothwell	294
„	Death of Shane O'Neill	326
„	Battle of Carberry Hill	294
„	Revolt of the Netherlands	290, 306
1568	Battle of Langside: Mary surrenders to Elizabeth	285, 294
„	*James VI. king of Scotland*	285, 286, 295, 296, 406-408
„	Capture of the treasure-fleet	307, 310
„	Hawkins at St. Juan de Ullua	309
1569	Plot of the Duke of Norfolk and the northern Earls	295
1569-73	Revolt in Munster	329
1570-82	Negotiations for Elizabeth's marriage to a French Prince	299
1570	The Pope excommunicates Elizabeth	295, 297
1571	The Ridolfi Plot	295
„	Battle of Lepanto	300, 303
„	Extension of the Treason laws	297
1572	'Beggars of the Sea' take Brill	298

DATE		PAGE
1572	William of Orange leads the Netherlands against Spain	287, 298, 300, 306
„	Massacre of St. Bartholomew	297, 299
„	'Admonishment to Parliament'	348
1572-3	Drake's Voyage to the West Indies and the Spanish Main	311
1575	First executions of Catholic missionaries	297
1576-78	Frobisher's search for a North-West Passage	305
1577	Revolt in Connaught	329
1577-80	Voyage of the *Golden Hind*	311, 312
1579	Spain and the Papacy instigate rebellion in Ireland	330
1580	Massacre of Smerwick	330
„	Arrival of Parsons and Campion in England	297
„	Annexation of Portugal by Spain	300, 303, 305
1581	Melville issues the 'Second Book of Discipline'	285
1582	The Ruthven Raid	296
1583	Whitgift Abp. of Canterbury	349
„	Powers of the High Commission Court enlarged	347, 420, 433
„	Settlement in Newfoundland	314, 342
1584-86	English 'plantations' in Munster	331
„	Murder of William of Orange	299
„	League of the French Catholics with Spain	299
1584-90	Raleigh plans colony in Virginia	313-4
1585	Elizabeth sends an army to the Netherlands	300, 312, 339
1585-6	Drake in the West Indies	301, 313
1585-87	Davis explores Greenland and the North American coast	305
1586	Restrictions on printing	350
1586	Battle of Zutphen: death of Sir Philip Sidney	300
„	Babington Plot	301
1587	Execution of Mary Queen of Scots	301
„	Drake raids Cadiz harbour	315
1588	The Spanish Armada	314-318
1588-9	'Martin Marprelate' tracts	350
1589-1610	*Henry IV. king of France*	359, 361, 364
1589	Drake attacks Spanish ports	319
1590-6	Publication of the 'Faerie Queene'	—
„	Cartwright's agitation for Synods	350
1591	Attack on the Azores: the *Revenge*	319
1593	Peter Wentworth imprisoned	352
1595	Rebellion of Hugh O'Neill	332
1596	Essex burns Cadiz	319
1598	Battle of Yellow Ford	332
„	Edict of Nantes	359, 517
1599	Essex sent to subdue the Irish	332, 339
1600	Establishment of the East India Company	346, 372, 376
1601	Monopolies abolished	354
„	'Poor Law' Act	339, 343
„	A Spanish force lands at Kinsale	332
„	Rebellion and death of Essex	332

DATE		PAGE
1603	James I.	361, 364-366, 373, 374, 381, 385-9, 391-395, 403, 407-410
„	End of the Irish Rebellion	333, 401
1604	Hampton Court Conference	386
1604-11	First Parliament of James I.	390-2
1604	Peace with Spain	362, 364, 371, 375, 386
„	French settlement in Acadia	379
1605	The Gunpowder Plot	385
1605-27	*Jehangir Emperor of India*	374
1606	The Virginia Companies	372, 380
1607	First settlement in Virginia	381, 811
„	The Catholic League	360
1608	Calvinist Protestant Union	360, 362
„	Plantation of Ulster	402
„	Issue of a 'New Book of Rates'	391
„	French settlement in Quebec	379
1610	Murder of Henry IV. of France	364
1611	Completion of the Authorised Version of the Bible	386, 417
1611-32	*Gustavus Adolphus king of Sweden*	367, 519
1612	Bermuda Islands colonised	382, 806
1613	Marriage of Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine	362, 364
1613-15	Champlain explores the great Lakes	379, 529
1614	The 'Addled' Parliament	392
„	Downton defeats the Portuguese off Surat	375
1615	Sir Thomas Roe's embassy to the Great Mogul	374, 375
1616	British 'factory' at Surat	375
1617	Raleigh's expedition to Guiana	378
1618-48	Thirty Years' War	364-369, 395-7
1618	First British trading-post at Gambia	535
1619	Representative government in Virginia	357, 382
1620	Council of New England established	383, 421
„	Voyage of the *Mayflower*	383
„	Battle of the White Mountain	365
1621	Impeachment of Bacon and Mompesson	392, 393
„	Dutch West India Company organised	371, 376
1623	English settlements in St. Christopher	378, 805
„	Massacre of Amboyna	373, 374, 480
1624-30	War with Spain	365, 393, 403, 414
1624-54	Dutch supremacy in Brazil	377
1624-26	Dutch Colony of the New Netherlands	377
1624	Settlement of Barbados	378, 805
„	British alliance with France	366
1625	Charles I.	366, 394-400, 404, 409-415, 422, 427-438, 441-444, 449-451, 454-457, 475
„	Projects of English intervention in the Thirty Years' War	366, 395-397, 618
„	First Parliament of Charles I.	395
„	Attack on Cadiz	365, 396
„	Grotius' '*de Jure Belli et Pacis*'	362

DATE		PAGE
1626	Charles' second Parliament: Buckingham impeached	396
„	Virtual promise of the 'Graces' to Ireland	404, 405
„	Battle of Lutter	366, 397
1627-58	*Shah Jehan Mogul Emperor*	374
1627-29	War with France	366, 380, 403, 414
1627	Company of New France created	379
1627	Imposition of 'Benevolences' and 'Forced Loan'	397
1628	Third Parliament: Petition of Right	397-399, 421, 428, 433
„	Murder of Buckingham	399, 414
„	Massachusetts Company founded	421
„	Colonisation of Nevis and Barbuda	378, 805
1629	The Edict of Restitution	367
1629-40	Personal government of Charles I.	367, 395, 399, 414, 418, 427-430
1629-32	The English occupy Quebec	380
1630	Puritan settlement of Massachusetts	422, 809
1631	Battle of Breitenfeld	367
1632-40	Wentworth Lord-Deputy of Ireland	404-406, 430, 436
1632	Gustavus Adolphus killed at Lützen	367
„	Colonisation of Maryland, Antigua and Montserrat	378, 426, 427, 811
1632-33	British factories opened in Bengal and at Masulipatam	375
1633	French intervention in the Thirty Years' War	368
„	First settlement in Connecticut	424, 533, 809
„	Laud Archbishop of Canterbury	395, 410, 418-421, 432, 435
„	Prynne's '*Histrio-mastix*'	418, 420
1634	A High Commission Court set up in Scotland	410, 412
„	First levy of 'ship-money' in England	428, 475
1635	Issue of the Book of Canons for Scotland	410, 412
1635-59	France at War with Spain	368, 480, 482, 514
1635	Second levy of 'ship-money'	428, 475
„	French plantations in Martinique and Guadeloupe	377, 680
1636-8	Settlements in Rhode Island	425, 427
1636	Third levy of 'ship-money'	397, 429
1637	Hampden's Case	429
„	The Scots reject Laud's liturgy: the 'Tables' set up	410-412
1638	Scottish National Covenant	411, 502
„	Swedish settlement in Delaware	536-538, 810
„	Colonies founded in New Haven and Honduras	378, 425, 809
„	General Assembly of Glasgow	412
1639	Erection of Fort St. George (Madras)	376
„	First Bishops' War: Truce of Berwick	413

DATE		PAGE
1640	The 'Short' Parliament	413, 431
„	Second Bishops' War	431
1640-60	The Long Parliament (*Nov.*)	431-439, 455, 465, 485
1640-88	*Frederick William the Great Elector*	520, 521, 523
1640-68	Portuguese struggle for independence	514, 525
1641	Triennial Act (*Feb.*)	433, 500
„	Attainder and execution of Strafford (*May*)	432, 434-436
„	Charles I. in Scotland (*Aug.*)	432, 501
„	The Irish Rebellion (*Oct.*)	437
„	The Grand Remonstrance (*Nov.*)	437
1642	Arrest of the Five Members	438
„	French settlement of Montreal	380
1642-44	Explorations of Tasman	373
1642-48	Civil War	358, 427, 440-455
1642	Assembly of Irish Catholics at Kilkenny	440, 449
„	Battle of Edgehill: the Royalists take Oxford	443
1643-1715	*Louis XIV. king of France*	511-518, 522, 526-530, 544, 549, 551, 561-563, 567, 601-606, 613, 614, 650
1643	Westminster Assembly of Divines	445
„	Royalist successes at Adwalton Moor and Bristol	443
„	Charles seeks aid from Ireland: Cessation of arms	444
„	The Solemn League and Covenant	445, 462, 498
„	New England Federation formed	425
1644	Battles of Marston Moor and Tippermuir	446, 447
„	*Areopagitica* published	471
1644-45	'Directory of Public Worship'	445
1645	The Self-denying Ordinance: the New Model Army	448, 449
„	Battles of Naseby and Langport	448
„	Charles I. negotiates with the Irish Catholics	449
„	Battles of Kilsyth and Philiphaugh	449
1646	Surrender of Oxford: Charles joins the Scottish Army	449
„	Battle of Benburb. Siege of Dublin	450
1647	The Scots leave Charles with Parliament	451
„	The Army elects Agitators: expulsion of the Eleven Members	453
„	Ormond surrenders Dublin. Battle of Dangan Hill	450
„	Charles escapes to Isle of Wight	454
1648	The Second Civil War	442, 454, 455
„	The Shorter Catechism	415
„	Treaties of Westphalia	363, 368, 520
„	Pride's Purge (*Dec.*)	455
1649	Execution of Charles I. (*Jan.*)	456-8
„	Abolition of the Monarchy and House of Lords	458
„	Reform of the Navy (*Feb.*)	475, 476
„	Milton Secretary to the Council of State	459, 464
1649	Battle of Rathmines	460
„	Cromwell storms Drogheda and Wexford	461
„	Royalist ships driven from Kinsale (*Nov.*)	460, 476
1650	Montrose executed	462
„	Charles II. in Scotland (*June*): battle of Dunbar (*Sept.*)	460, 462-3
„	Portuguese vessels sunk (*Sept.*): Rupert's fleet destroyed (*Nov.*)	476
1651	Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope	373
„	Battle of Worcester	463
„	The Navigation Act	478, 480, 532, 628
„	Hobbes' *Leviathan*	572, 574
1652	Surrender of Galway. Articles of Kilkenny	462
„	Institution of the 'Board of Triers'	464, 471
1652-54	First Dutch Naval War	478-481
1652	Battles of Kentish Knock and Dungeness	479
1653	Naval actions of Portland, Gabbard Shoal, Scheveningen	478-480
„	Rump Parliament ejected (*April*)	465
„	Barebone's Parliament (*July*)	466
1653-55	The Irish 'Act of Satisfaction'	473-4
1653	The Instrument of Government (*Dec.*)	467, 472
„	CROMWELL LORD PROTECTOR (*Dec.*)	467-474, 477, 480-484
1654-67	English occupation of Acadia	481
1654	First Protectorate Parliament	467
1654-55	Blake attacks the 'Barbary corsairs'	482
„	Attack on Hispaniola and Jamaica	481, 533
1655	England under major-generals	468-9
1655-59	Anglo-French war with Spain	482, 483, 514
1656	Blockade of Cadiz	482
„	Second Protectorate Parliament	469-70
1657	The 'Humble Petition and Advice'	469, 472
„	Spanish fleet sunk at Santa Cruz	482
1658-1707	*Aurangzib Mogul Emperor*	535, 763
1658	Battle of the Dunes: England gains Dunkirk	482, 483, 514
„	RICHARD CROMWELL PROTECTOR	484, 485
1659	Third Protectorate Parliament	484
„	Rump Parliament restored: the Protectorate abolished	485
1659-80	*Sivaji leads the Mahrattas*	535, 763
1660	The Long Parliament restored (*Feb.*) and dissolved (*March*)	485
„	Convention Parliament	486, 497, 498
„	Declaration of Breda	486, 496
„	The Restoration (*May*)	486, 494-507
1660	CHARLES II.	486, 495, 500, 501, 504, 514, 516-518, 540, 543-551, 554
1660-67	Clarendon Chief Minister	497, 530, 542
1660	Act of Indemnity and Oblivion	497

DATE		PAGE
1660	Navigation Act	532, 539, 628
1661	East India Company reorganised	534
„	The Scottish Rescissory Act	501
„	The Savoy Conference	498
1661-79	Cavalier Parliament	498-500, 543-50
1661	Abolition of Prerogative Courts	500
1661-63	Militia Acts	500
1661	Corporation Act	498, 499, 576
1662	Act of Uniformity	498, 499, 543
„	Licensing Act	498, 553, 577
„	British African Company founded	535
„	The Royal Society established	510
„	Act of Settlement for Ireland	505, 586
„	Poor Law 'Settlement Act'	786
„	Dunkirk ceded to France	483, 514
1663	Foundation of Carolina	534, 536, 811
1663-4	Turkish attack on Hungary	513, 522
1663	Completion of *Paradise Lost*	499
1664	Conventicle Act	499, 502, 543
„	Triennial Act	500, 554, 575
„	The French West and East India Companies established	526
„	English attack on the New Netherlands	515, 536, 537
1665-67	Second Dutch War	514, 536, 543
1665	Battle of Lowestoft	514
„	The Great Plague	499, 515
„	Quaker settlements in New Jersey	537, 810
1665-1700	*Charles II. king of Spain*	601, 603
1665-72	The French in Madagascar	526
1665	Five Mile Act	499, 543
1666-67	France aids Holland against England	514, 527, 535
1666	Battle of the Downs	514
„	French Academy of Sciences founded	510
„	The Great Fire of London	515
„	The Pentland Rising	502
1667-8	The 'War of Devolution'	515
1667	The Dutch in the Medway (*June*)	515
„	Peace of Breda (*July*)	515, 536
„	Impeachment of Clarendon (*Aug.*)	543
1667-73	The 'Cabal'	544-547
1668	The Triple Alliance (*Jan.*)	515, 544
„	Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (*May*)	516
„	Bombay granted to the East India Company	534
1670	Scottish Conventicle Act	503
„	Secret Treaty of Dover	516, 545
„	Bahama Is. granted to proprietors	535
1672	Stop of the Exchequer	545, 546, 622
„	Declaration of Indulgence	545-7, 557
„	Anglo-French war with Holland: battle of Southwold Bay	516, 546
1672-76	Polish resistance to the Turks	522
1672	France invades Holland	516, 521, 527
„	William of Orange Stadholder	516
„	Murder of the de Witts	516
1673	The Test Act	547, 555, 556, 576
1673-79	Danby chief Minister	547-550
1673	Battle of the Texel	516
„	Second marriage of the Duke of York	547

DATE		PAGE
1674	England and Holland make peace	516, 548
„	French factory at Pondicherry	768
1674-96	*John Sobieski king of Poland*	522, 665
1675	Battle of Fehrbellin	521
„	Second secret treaty between Charles II. and Louis XIV.	548, 549
1677	Marriage of William of Orange	519, 548, 552
1678	Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*	499
„	The Popish Plot	549, 550, 553
„	Treaty of Nimwegen	517
„	Danby impeached (*Dec.*)	549
1679	Cavalier Parliament dissolved	549
„	*Habeas Corpus* Act	65, 398, 550
„	Battles of Drumclog and Bothwell Bridge	503
„	Exclusion Bill introduced	550, 551
„	First 'Chamber of Reunion'	518, 551
1681-82	Colonisation of Pennsylvania and the Delaware Territories	538, 810
1681-82	La Salle explores the Mississippi	529
1681	Strasbourg annexed by France	518, 601
„	Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*	553
1681-84	Forfeitures of Borough Charters	554
1682-99	Conflict between Austria and Turkey	522, 665
1683	The Rye House Plot	554
„	Siege of Vienna	522, 665
„	Execution of Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney	554
1684	Holy League against the Turks	523
„	Charter of Massachusetts suspended	540
1685	James II.	540, 555-558, 562, 563, 568
„	Battle of Sedgemoor: the 'Bloody Assizes'	556
1685	Revocation of the Edict of Nantes	517, 528, 558
1686-8	Andros' colonial rule	540, 591
1686	Court of High Commission revived	565
„	The League of Augsburg	561
1687	Tyrconnel Lord-Deputy of Ireland	557, 565
„	Declaration of Indulgence	557, 577
„	Second battle of Mohacz	523
„	Publication of Newton's *Principia*	510
1688	Trial of the Seven Bishops (*June*)	558
„	Capture of Belgrad by Austria	561
1688-97	War of the League of Augsburg	561, 564, 567, 597-600
1688	William of Orange lands at Torbay (*Nov.*)	561-563
„	Flight of James II. (*Dec.*)	563, 574
„	The Revolution	523, 540, 560-596, 640
1689	Convention Parliament (*Jan.*)	564, 575
„	Declaration of Right (*Feb.*)	575
„	William III. and Mary II.	564-568, 570, 574, 579-583, 591, 598, 602-605
„	James II. lands in Ireland	566, 586

DATE		PAGE
1689	Scottish 'Claim of Right' (*March*)	581
„	Mutiny Act, Civil List, and Toleration Act	575, 576
„	England joins the Grand Alliance	564
„	Battle of Killiecrankie (*July*)	565
„	Relief of Londonderry (*July*). Battle of Newtown Butler	566
1689-1725	*Peter the Great Emperor of Russia*	666-669
1689	Bill of Rights	575
„	Locke's *Essay of Government*	574
1690	Presbyterianism re-established in Scotland	581
„	Battles of Beachy Head, Fleurus, and the Boyne	512, 567
„	English factory at Calcutta	679, 768
1690-97	War in the Hudson Valley and Acadia	600
1691	Capture of Athlone and Battle of Aghrim	568
„	Treaty of Limerick	563, 587, 588
„	Massachusetts granted a new charter	594, 810
1692	Massacre of Glencoe	565
„	Battle of La Hogue	568, 598
„	Battle of Steenkerke	598
1693	Battle of Neerwinden	598
1694	Bank of England founded	622-624
„	Triennial Act	575
„	Death of Queen Mary	571, 580
1695	Bank of Scotland established	622
„	Capture of Namur	598
„	Irish Penal Code initiated	588, 692
1696	Establishment of the Board of Trade and Plantations	592-594
1697-1718	*Charles XII. king of Sweden*	613, 652, 666-669
1697	*Augustus of Saxony elected king of Poland*	666, 668, 674
„	Treaty of Ryswick	600
1698	Peter the Great in England	666
„	The New East India Company	627
1698-1700	Scottish Expeditions to Darien	582
1698	First Partition Treaty (*Oct.*)	601-603
1699	Peace of Carlowitz	523, 665
„	Second Partition Treaty (*June*)	603
„	Export of Irish woollen goods prohibited	589
„	The Northern League against Sweden	667
1700-46	*Philip of Anjou king of Spain*	604, 615, 670
1701	Elector of Brandenburg crowned king of Prussia	616, 712
„	Act of Settlement	577, 583, 605, 638, 694
„	The Grand Alliance formed	605-608
1702	ANNE	605, 608, 634, 635, 638, 639
1702-13	War of the Spanish Succession	606-615, 634
1703	Methuen treaties between England and Portugal	610, 626, 636
„	Scottish Act of Security	584
1704	English forces sent to Portugal	611
1704	*Stanislas Leszinski king of Poland*	666-668, 674-676
„	Capture of Gibraltar (*Aug.*)	611, 672
„	Battles of Blenheim and Malaga (*Aug.*)	606, 611
1705	Catalonia and Valencia won for the Allies	612
1706	Battle of Ramillies (*May*)	612
„	Allied troops enter Madrid (*June*)	612
„	Battle of Turin (*Sept.*)	612
1707	Battle of Almanza	613
„	Union of England and Scotland	583-586, 649
„	The Place Act	578, 694
1708	Union of the East India Companies	628
„	Battle of Oudenarde	614
„	Capture of Minorca and Lille	613, 614
1709	Battles of Pultawa and Malplaquet	614, 668
1710	Trial of Sacheverell	635
„	The Baltic Provinces seized by Russia	668
„	British and Colonials seize Acadia	616
1710-14	Ministry of Harley and St. John	615, 635-639
1711	South Sea Company founded	636, 678
„	Swift's *Conduct of the Allies*	615, 631
„	Occasional Conformity Act	634, 637
1711-40	*Charles VI. Emperor*	676, 713
1712	Creation of Tory Peers	630, 636, 655
1713	Treaty of Utrecht	615-617, 636, 669-671
„	The 'Asiento' Treaty	617, 637, 681
1714-19	Hanoverian-Swedish dispute over Bremen and Verden	668
1714	The Schism Act	637, 638
„	Bolingbroke in power (*July*)	638
„	Death of Queen Anne (*Aug.*)	639
„	GEORGE I.	639, 648, 653, 668, 687, 688
1715	Whig Parliament (*March*)	640, 653
„	Oxford and Bolingbroke impeached (*June*)	640
„	Jacobite Rebellion: battles of Preston and Sheriffmuir	649-651, 653
1715-74	*Louis XV. king of France*	671, 725
1715-18	Turkish attacks on Hungary	665
1716	The Septennial Act	653
1717	The Triple Alliance	671-675, 688
1717-21	Ministry of Stanhope	688
1717	Law's 'Compagnie de l'Occident': Louisiana founded	530, 677, 684
„	Grant of a Firman to the East India Company	679
1718	Treaty of Passarowitz	665, 672
„	Battle of Cape Passaro	672
1719	Repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts	691
„	Treaty of Stockholm	668
„	Declaratory Act: the English Parliament legislates for Ireland	692
„	Rejection of the Peerage Bill	655
1720	The Pragmatic Sanction	676, 713
„	The South Sea Bubble	679, 688

DATE		PAGE
1720	Erection of Fort Louisbourg	685
1721-42	Walpole's Ministry	674, 688-697
1721	Treaty of Nystadt	669
1722	Ostend Company founded	672, 677
„	Workhouses Act	787
1723-24	Issue of Wood's Halfpence: the *Drapier's Letters*	691
1725	Treaty of Vienna (*April*)	672, 677
„	Treaty of Hanover (*Sept.*)	673
1725-35	Bolingbroke in Opposition	640, 697
1726	First issue of the *Craftsman*	697
1727	Siege of Gibraltar	673
„	George II.	687, 688, 738
1729	The Methodist Society founded at Oxford	707
„	Treaty of Seville	673
1732	Foundation of Georgia	677, 705, 811
1733	Excise Bill and Molasses Act	680, 695
1733-35	War of the Polish Succession	674-676
1733	Treaty of the Escorial (First Family Compact)	675, 677, 712
1735	Griffith Jones and the religious revival in Wales	706
1735-48	Labourdonnais in Mauritius	769
1735-38	The Wesleys in Georgia	707
1736	The Porteous Riots	691
1738	Treaty of Vienna	675
1739	John Wesley begins his travelling missionary life	707, 796
„	Nadir Shah sacks Delhi	765
„	'Jenkins' Ear' War	682, 710-712
1740-86	*Frederick the Great king of Prussia*	712-714, 724-727, 740, 741, 743, 753, 757
1740-80	*Maria Theresa queen of Hungary*	713, 714, 716, 724
1740-48	War of the Austrian Succession	699, 713-718
1741-54	Dupleix' rule in Pondicherry	769-772
1742	Fall of Walpole	688
1743	Battle of Dettingen	715
„	Treaty of Fontainebleau (Second Family Compact)	714, 725
1743-54	Pelham's Administration	689, 698, 728
1744	Naval battle off Toulon (*Feb.*)	716
1744-48	England and France at war (*March*)	714-718, 769
1745	Battle of Fontenoy	715
„	New Englanders capture Louisbourg	717-719
„	Charles Edward's Jacobite Rising: battle of Prestonpans	659-663, 716
1746	Battles of Falkirk and Culloden	661
1746-55	Pitt Paymaster of the Forces	728, 730
1746	The French take Madras	717, 719, 769
1747	Scottish 'Heritable Jurisdictions' abolished	662, 799, 800
1748	Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle	718, 724, 770
1749	British fort at Halifax	720
1750	Colonial Manufactures Prohibition Bill	696
1751	Clive attacks and defends Arcot	771
1752	Relief of Trichinopoly	772
1754-56	Newcastle's Ministry	689, 726-729, 736
1754	Congress of Albany	722
„	Washington defeated at Great Meadows	723
„	Dupleix recalled	725, 772
1755	The Northern Sarkars ceded to the French	773
„	Braddock's defeat	723, 733
„	Deportation of Acadians	721
1756	Convention of Westminster (*Jan.*)	726
„	French-Austrian Treaty of Versailles (*May*)	727
„	England declares war on France (*May*)	724
„	France gains Minorca (*June*)	735, 756
„	Black Hole of Calcutta (*June*)	736, 774
„	Pitt's first Ministry (*Dec.*)	736-738
1757	Clive regained Calcutta (*Jan.*)	742, 774
„	Pitt dismissed (*April*)	738
„	Battle of Kolin (*May*)	740, 741
„	Battle of Plassey (*June*)	742, 775
1757-61	The Pitt and Newcastle Coalition	738-747, 749, 753-755, 778
1757	Expedition to Rochefort	740
„	Convention of Klosterzeven	740, 741
„	Battles of Rossbach and Leuthen	741
1758	Capture of Senegal (*April*)	744
„	Lally takes Fort St. David (*June*)	776
„	Battle of Crefeld (*June*)	743
„	Capture of Louisbourg (*July*)	745
„	Battles of Zorndorf (*Aug.*) and Hochkirch (*Oct.*)	743
1758-59	French plans for invading England	746-748
1759	Masulipatam taken from French	776
„	Capture of Guadeloupe and Marie Galante	749, 752, 756
„	Fort Niagara and Ticonderoga occupied	750, 752
1759-88	*Charles III. king of Spain*	754
1759	Battle of Minden and Action of Lagos (*Aug.*)	748, 750
„	Wolfe takes Quebec (*Sept.*)	750-752
	Battle of Quiberon Bay (*Nov.*)	748, 777
1760	Battle of Wandewash (*Jan.*)	753, 777
„	Battle of Liegnitz	753
„	George III.	654, 698, 753, 754
„	Battle of Torgau	753
1761	Pondicherry captured	756, 777
„	Battle of Panipat	766, 767
„	Seizure of Belleisle	753
„	Third Family Compact (*Aug.*)	754
„	Pitt resigns: Lord Bute Prime Minister (*Oct.*)	755, 758
1762	War with Spain: conquest of the Windward Islands	755, 756, 806
„	Capture of Havana and the Philippines	755, 756
„	Spanish forces driven out of Portugal	756
1763	Treaty of Paris	756-756

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